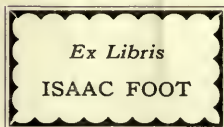


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SIR WILFRID LAWSON







Sam'l Walker Ph. sc

Wilfrid Lawson

from a Photograph by Bassano 1884

# SIR WILFRID LAWSON

## A MEMOIR

EDITED BY THE RIGHT HON.

GEORGE W. E. RUSSELL

'Laws should be adapted to those who have the heaviest stake in the country ; for whom misgovernment means not mortified pride or stinted luxury, but want and pain and degradation, and risk to their own lives and to their children's souls.'—LORD ACTON.

WITH PORTRAITS

LONDON

SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE

1909

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TO  
BASIL WILBERFORCE  
ARCHDEACON OF WESTMINSTER  
I INSCRIBE THIS MEMORIAL  
OF HIS  
COMRADE IN A GREAT CAMPAIGN



## PREFATORY NOTE

THIS book is founded on a volume of 'Reminiscences,' which my dear and honoured friend, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, wrote in the closing years of his life. The scope of these Reminiscences may best be given in his own words.

'These pages are intended to be a record of certain Parliamentary and public incidents of which I have been a spectator, and in most of which I have been a participator, during a tolerably long Parliamentary career. It has been a matter of interest to me to read, and to make some comments upon, them. Whether anybody else will take an interest in reading them is quite another matter.'

In preparing these Reminiscences for the Press I have had the advantage of consulting the exact and copious journal which Sir Wilfrid kept from his entry into Parliament in 1859 to the last year of his life. In this journal he analysed every debate which he heard, and recorded the reasons for each vote which he gave. I have illustrated the narrative, wherever it seemed expedient to do so, both from contemporary records, and from ample stores of private information kindly contributed by Sir Wilfrid's family and by his innumerable friends.

The magnificent sentence inscribed on the title-page seems to embody, with absolute precision, the spirit which animated the life-long labours of Wilfrid Lawson.

G. W. E. R.

*Michaelmas*, 1909.



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The portrait of Sir Wilfrid Lawson which appears on the front of the cover of this volume is a reproduction of the medallion on the statue at Aspatria.



# SIR WILFRID LAWSON

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY YEARS

It is a pity that Sir Walter Scott never encountered the name of 'William de Wybergh of Wyberghthwaite,' for surely he would have immortalized it in 'Ivanhoe' or 'The Talisman.' The pedigree of Wybergh bristles with romantic appellations, and glows with the varied 'tinctures' of a hundred knightly scutcheons. 'The arms of Wybergh are *or*, three bars *sable*, and in chief three stoiles of the last.' The demesne of Clifton in Westmorland has been possessed by the Wyberghs 'in an unbroken male descent since the thirty-eighth year of Edward III.' Thomas Wybergh suffered severely in the cause of Charles I., and was in the list of 'delinquents whose estates were ordered by Cromwell to be sold in 1652.' But after the Revolution of 1688 it would appear that the Wyberghs transferred their allegiance from the Stuarts to the House of Hanover; for, 'during the rising of 1715, Thomas Wybergh was taken prisoner by the Jacobites, and exchanged for Alan Ayscough,' who had fought on the Pretender's side. And in the rising of 1745 the Wybergh of the day (son of the one just mentioned and also Thomas) had an unpleasant experience of civil war. After recording that his hay, oats, and carts were commandeered for the Pretender's army, he thus proceeds: 'On Wednesday, the 18th November, in the evening,

skirmish at Clifton town end, between the King's soldiers, commanded by ye Duke of Cumberland, and ye rebels. Ten of ye Duke's dragoons were killed on ye spot, one died of his wounds at Clifton, and one at Appleby. All ye rebels ran from Clifton before seven of ye clock at night, and all were fled from Penrith before twelve. The 17th and 18th, when the skirmish was, my house was more plundered by ye rebels, in so much that I believe I sustained more loss than any other in the county.' This confessor in the cause of law and order died in 1753, and was succeeded by his eldest son William; and William, dying in 1757, was succeeded by Thomas, who died in 1827. This Thomas Wybergh married Isabel Hartley, and had a numerous family; one of whom, Wilfrid, assumed the name of Lawson, and was the father of Sir Wilfrid Lawson, the subject of this memoir.

The Lawsons of Isel, and eventually of Brayton, both in Cumberland, were a family of ancient pedigree and great estate. They repeatedly sat in Parliament for Cumbrian constituencies, and increased their acreage by judicious marriages. Wilfrid Lawson of Isel was created a baronet in 1688, and the title expired with Sir Wilfrid Lawson, 10th Baronet, who died childless in 1806. His wife had been Anne Hartley, sister of Isabel Hartley, who married Thomas Wybergh of Clifton; and Sir Wilfrid, looking round him for an heir, bequeathed Brayton and his other estates to his wife's nephew, Thomas Wybergh, second son of Thomas and Isabel Wybergh. This Thomas assumed the name of Lawson, and died in 1812, when the estates of Brayton passed to his next brother, Wilfrid Wybergh, who in turn took the name of Lawson, and was created a Baronet in 1831. He married Caroline, daughter of Sir James Graham of Netherby, and sister to the Peelite statesman of that name, and by her had four sons and four daughters.

Sir Wilfrid Lawson (1795-1867), the first Baronet of the second creation, was a man of strong opinions and independent

character, and the influence which he exercised upon his family was of so marked a nature that it claims mention in a memoir of his more famous son and successor.

Here I avail myself of material which bears the unmistakable impress of the religious school from which it emanates, but even those who might express themselves differently will recognize the momentous character of the influence described.

‘Sir Wilfrid Lawson the elder, on reaching middle life, had a dangerous illness; and when brought (as he thought) to death’s door, and when the unseen realities of the eternal world seemed breaking upon him, he longed for religious instruction, guidance, and consolation. This he did not expect to find among the worldly or sporting parsons of the neighbouring parishes, and so he sent for a humble Presbyterian minister from the neighbouring hamlet of Blennerhasset—a Mr. Walton—who by his instructions and prayers, by God’s blessing, brought peace of mind to Sir Wilfrid, so that when he rose from his sick-bed it was with a new view of life and a new purpose in living. In a word, he had become a true, earnest Christian upon personal enquiry and conviction, and his tastes and inclinations and aims were completely changed, and he determined henceforth to spread those views of truth that had changed and blessed him, by devoting time and thought and means to their diffusion among his neighbours and friends. Having obtained a peace of mind never known before, he was anxious that those around should share the same priceless treasure. The Scriptures were a new revelation to him, and with strong faith in Jesus Christ as a loving, ever-present Saviour, he felt constrained by example and word and walk to lead others to trust in and serve Him. He had heard that a society existed in London called the Home Missionary Society, the object of which was to send missionaries into the neglected villages and hamlets of England, and he invited Dr. Andrew Reed (father of the late Sir Charles Reed, Chairman of the London



School Board) to stay at Brayton, with a view to establishing a Home Mission station in the neighbouring village of Aspatria.'

This invitation was attended by important consequences to the career of Sir Wilfrid's boys, and these will be narrated in their proper place.

Meanwhile I am indebted to the kindness of a surviving daughter for this vivid sketch of the elder Sir Wilfrid Lawson :

'Our father was greatly interested in all efforts for the good of his fellow-men, and frequent "Deputations" from various religious, social, and political societies used to come to Brayton. Religious services were frequently held in the house, and in the neighbouring villages; which we used to attend. It often caused surprise that our father was so keenly interested in religious meetings, while at the same time he kept up all his old interests in country sports and occupations. He enjoyed a long day's hunting or shooting almost to the end of his life, and in skating and playing hockey on the ice he often tired out many younger men. He was extremely fond of open-air life, and had a most enthusiastic love of our Cumberland lakes and mountains, often taking a few days' refreshment in driving about among them. He was a very silent man, but he certainly had the power of attaching people to him in a great degree.

'He was, I believe, a remarkably good business man, and he took a keen personal interest in the management of affairs, specially of his farm and herd of Shorthorns. Also he took great interest in railway business, having had much to do with the formation of the Maryport and Carlisle Railway, which passed through a good deal of his own property, at a time when many other landowners opposed it.

'He was much interested in all political movements, and was a strong Radical. He greatly encouraged every kind of Temperance work and Band of Hope effort, long before they became at all fashionable. Many well-known Temperance



lecturers came to Brayton from time to time. My father was a Nonconformist himself, but he gladly welcomed all who were trying in any way to work for the good of others. Both he and my mother were fond of a quiet country life, and they seldom paid visits.

‘We were all brought up in a very simple way. There was no display of any sort, but our father provided every imaginable pleasure for us all, in the free, open-air, country, life which we so much enjoyed. As little children we had pets and gardens and ponies to our hearts’ content, and when we grew older we had the best horses that could be obtained. It used often to happen that our horses were the finest, and our carriages the shabbiest, in all the neighbourhood.’

That last sentence puts the finishing touch to a graphic picture of a truly enjoyable and gentlemanlike home. Into that home Wilfrid Lawson, the subject of this memoir, was born on September 4, 1829. It may seem premature at this point to describe his personal appearance, but it may as well be said that he grew up a tall, well-shaped, and vigorous lad, emphatically ‘sound in wind and limb,’ and in his handsome line of aquiline features and dark hair and bright eyes recalling the traditional beauty of his famous uncle, Sir James Graham. The beard, which came later, partially obscured the resemblance, but it asserted itself to the end in the profile and the brow.

It is satisfactory to know that the infant Wilfrid displayed no precocious talents. He took so long in learning to read that Lady Lawson began to despair, and was only reassured by a tactful governess, who reminded her that Sir Walter Scott had also found great difficulty in mastering the alphabet.

The reign of the governess soon came to an end, and the anxious questionings which always attend the education of an active and high-spirited boy began to beset Sir Wilfrid and Lady Lawson. Sir Wilfrid had himself been educated

at a Grammar-School in Yorkshire, and, as a Fellow-Commoner, at Trinity Hall, Cambridge; but, like many of the religious people of his time, he formed a very unfavourable opinion of schools and colleges, as regards both their moral and their intellectual discipline. He resolved therefore on the hazardous experiment of educating his boys at home, and it was in this connexion that the presence of Dr. Reed at Aspatria became important. The tutor who had first had charge of Sir Wilfrid's boys had just left them, and Sir Wilfrid consulted Dr. Reed about a successor, begging him to procure a tutor from one of the Nonconformist colleges in London. Dr. Reed in turn consulted Dr. William Smith, afterwards famous as the editor of innumerable dictionaries, and then Classical Professor at the colleges of Homerton and Highbury. Dr. Smith recommended Mr. J. Oswald Jackson, in after-years a Congregational minister and the master of a private school; and Mr. Jackson became responsible for the education of young Wilfrid Lawson and his brothers.

In later life Wilfrid Lawson was accustomed to declare that he 'never had any education.' But this would seem to be a rather heightened way of stating the fact. Mr. Jackson, perhaps surmising that his pupil's statement might gain currency, was at the pains to compile for the benefit of posterity a statement of the educational method which he pursued, and to this statement I have had access. If only the boy learned a tenth part of what the tutor taught, he must have been even remarkably well educated. But knowledge acquired under such conditions as prevailed in the library at Brayton is, to use a favourite phrase of Archbishop Benson's, 'unexaminable.'

Mr. Jackson taught his pupil Greek and Latin prose, availing himself of the 'Guides' and 'Handbooks' then in common use; and read with him Cæsar, Ovid, Virgil, Cicero, Horace, Xenophon, Herodotus, and Homer. To this was added a sufficiency of mathematics, natural science, and

political economy, English and foreign history, and the elements of rhetoric and logic. When Mr. Jackson records that he taught his pupil to understand the remarkable ditty which begins, '*Barbara celarent darii ferioque prioris*,' he shows that, though himself a product of Homerton, he was loyal to the hoariest traditions of unreformed Oxford.

When Mr. Jackson began his work at Brayton, Wilfrid was just twelve years old, 'the most affectionate and intelligent of pupils.' The new tutor was not long in coming to the conclusion that he could not have a more genial, eager, and appreciative learner. Of the boy's 'zest and pluck in study' Mr. Jackson records the following instance:—

'It was a dull November day, and he and I were sitting in that beautiful library at Brayton, with Skiddaw in full view from the windows. It was that very library that Coleridge described as "one of the best in the kingdom for books of History and Natural History." We had been reading the last hundred lines of the second book of the "Iliad." Young Wilfrid was getting deeply interested in the exciting story, and, looking over the other twenty-two books, said, "I should like to read them all through." So we talked of the various heroes, Achilles, Hector, Agamemnon, Paris—of Helen and Hecuba, of Patroclus and Nestor, of Diomed and Ulysses. And, as we talked, the fire of enthusiasm burned in Wilfrid's breast until his desire was fanned into purpose and determination. So I said, "Well, you know we go away for a trip next May; I believe, if you work hard, without neglecting other studies, you might get through the remaining twenty-two books by then." "I will," he said. "I'll do it." I was reading from a pocket edition of the "Iliad," and, looking at me, Wilfrid said, "Now, I'll promise you, if I do the whole of the 'Iliad' by the beginning of May, I will have that pet edition of your Homer bound for you in calf, and an inscription with your name and the date of the day on which I accomplished my task." And as I write this narrative that cherished



little volume, bound in calf, and lettered in gold, lies before me, one of the most valued of my treasures.'

So much for the tutor's testimony. A tradition still lingers in the family that, after the day's labours were over, Wilfrid used to continue his private studies in the library, choosing the books which he liked best; and it is very likely that one of those books was Adam Smith's 'Political Economy,' of which he said to me in later life: 'That is one of the really great books of the world. All I know I learned from it.'

But, after all said and done, one suspects that books played a comparatively small part in young Wilfrid Lawson's education. When a strong, active, and healthy boy, full of intelligence and life, is brought up by a thoughtful father in a wild and beautiful country, and accustomed from his childhood to watch the sights and sounds of Nature and to note the oddities of human character, it may be safely said that he educates himself. Brayton was essentially a sporting house, and the young Lawsons were taught to ride, shoot, and fish from their very earliest boyhood. Wilfrid's first pony, a gift from his uncle, Sir James Graham, was called 'Diamond,' and was the forerunner of a long line of hunters of which 'Radical' was the most famous. As the boys never went to school, the whole family lived constantly together, brothers and sisters sharing the same interests, pursuits, and amusements. The youngest of the family records that Wilfrid was the kindest of elder brothers, always plotting treats and surprises for the younger members of the family, and encouraging them to take their part in whatever fun or frolic might be going forward.<sup>1</sup> From time to time he accompanied his parents or his tutor on foreign tours or short excursions to Scotland or the south of England, but his boyhood and youth were chiefly spent in Cumberland; and with the Cumberland Foxhounds his connexion was

<sup>1</sup> His favourite game was cricket, but he was rather an enthusiast than an adept.

long and intimate. The famous John Peel, who is 'kenn'd' all over the English-speaking world, was a Master of Foxhounds on a very primitive and limited scale, and hunted his own hounds in Cumberland for upwards of forty-six years. He died in 1854. By this time Wilfrid Lawson was twenty-five years old, desperately fond of hunting, and well supplied by his father with the sinews of war. So on the death of John Peel, with whom he had hunted ever since he could sit in a saddle, he bought Peel's hounds, amalgamated them with a small pack which he already possessed, and became Master of the Cumberland Foxhounds.

It is easy to conceive the popularity which now encircled the young Squire of Brayton. In addition to the more commonplace gifts of wealth and position, he had unbounded gaiety, the sweetest temper in the world, and a rich sense of incongruity and absurdity. 'He was made a magistrate when he was quite young. He took a keen interest in all County business and an active part in all that was going on. It was wonderful how he contrived to combine business and pleasure, and to be at all sorts of meetings and all sorts of entertainments all over the County, almost at the same time.' Among the lighter traits of his character which are remembered in his family was an exceptional talent for mimicry, which enabled him to reproduce in the domestic circle all the oddities and whimsicalities which he encountered in the work and amusement of the day. From early boyhood he displayed that knack of writing rapid, fluent, and vigorous verse which played so conspicuous a part in the serious correspondence of his mature life.

But all this time those who knew him best were aware that, deep under the superficial gaiety and exuberance of healthy youth, there lay a solid vein of resolute devotion to truth and duty. The elder Sir Wilfrid, a thorough-going and all-round Liberal, cared supremely for two causes—the cause of Temperance and the cause of Peace. And, happily

for him, his son was completely and enthusiastically at one with him on those great issues.

Sir Wilfrid had never cared to enter Parliament, but he saw in his eldest son some rare and special qualifications for Parliamentary life; and, in urging the younger Wilfrid to come forward as Liberal candidate, he was reinforced by the potent influence of his brother-in-law, Sir James Graham, one of the great landowners of Cumberland. That extremely able man, and very variable politician, was now in his sixty-sixth year. He had represented eight constituencies, and now sat for Carlisle; he had held high office in Whig and Tory Governments, and was one of the strongest Free Traders in the Peelite group. His health was beginning to fail, and he was no longer a candidate for office, but he was still a great Parliamentary figure, and in the House no one surpassed him in dignity and influence. Mr. Gladstone, to the end of his life, was accustomed to quote Graham as the greatest administrator whom he had ever known. His political opinions, which were eclectic and to some extent individual, by no means coincided with those of his brother-in-law Sir Wilfrid Lawson, and Sir Wilfrid's son; but he did not shrink from contact with their adventurous Radicalism, and actively promoted the scheme of bringing the younger Wilfrid forward for West Cumberland. The constituency, which returned two members, had always been unbrokenly Tory, and was dominated by the patriarchal influence of Lowther Castle.<sup>1</sup> 'Lord Lonsdale'—I quote from Wilfrid Lawson's 'Reminiscences'—'Lord Lonsdale virtually returned whomsoever he pleased, and I doubt whether there was even a show of consulting the gentlemen of the County in the election of the

<sup>1</sup> About fifty years ago a gentleman was living in one of the villages of West Cumberland just at the time when King William IV. died. He went into the grocer's shop in the village, and he said to the grocer, 'The King is dead.' Said the grocer, 'Has he left any sons?' 'No,' said the gentleman, 'none.' 'Then,' said the grocer, 'likely Lord Lowther will be King.'—*Sir Wilfrid Lawson at Cockermouth*, 1885.



Candidates. In those days we had among our country squires a respectable minority who professed Liberal principles; and in 1857 the Liberal squires, of whom my Father was perhaps the most prominent, agreed together to ask me to stand against the two Tory Candidates, who on this occasion were the Hon. Henry Lowther and General Wyndham.

Nothing loath, young Lawson entered the field, and his audacious attack on this Tory stronghold attracted the lively sympathy of all such as love the gallantry of adventurous youth.

Parliament was opened on the 3rd of February, 1857, and Cobden promptly gave notice of a motion condemning the violent measures which had been employed by the British authorities in the Canton river in order to avenge the seizure of the lorch *Arrow* by the Chinese, when she had hoisted the British flag. In the course of the speech introducing this motion, Cobden remarked that *Civis Romanus sum* was not a very conciliatory motto to inscribe on English counting-houses in foreign countries. This allusion to a motto which Palmerston had used with triumphant effect in the debate on Don Pacifico and his claims in 1850, and which had been made the text of a magnificent reply by Gladstone, led to an extremely acrimonious debate. Palmerston's speech in defence of his Chinese policy was, according to Greville, 'very dull in the first part, and very bow-wow in the second.' On the 3rd of March the Vote of Censure was carried. Palmerston announced an immediate appeal to the country, and Parliament was dissolved on the 21st of March. Wilfrid Lawson was duly nominated for West Cumberland. His sister writes:—'We attended the Nomination at Cockermouth, sitting in the carriage just outside the crowd, but near enough to the hustings to hear the speeches, and to rejoice when we found how thoroughly Wilfrid could make the people listen to him. I well remember how deadly pale he looked when he first appeared on the hustings, and then how he gained

courage when he began to speak, and how the shouting crowd gradually quieted down, and listened to him as if they could not help listening. We were all very proud of him, but he was never the least proud of himself. In those days he was often taunted with being a 'beardless youth,' and was represented as being merely a puppet brought forward by his uncle, Sir James Graham.'

At this point we may conveniently turn to the 'Reminiscences':—

'So far as I remember, the General Election was fought mainly on the *Civis Romanus* bluster, Rule Britannia, and British Supremacy declarations. This is always a popular and "taking" cry. It lives long, and not long since I was interested in hearing Mr. Alfred Lyttelton, in seconding the Address, give his adhesion to the maxim, "one's country right or wrong"—a doctrine which I should think would be repudiated by any tolerably enlightened heathen. At all events it was the essence of this cry which won the General Election of 1857. Bernal Osborne<sup>1</sup> wittily described the political creed of the Liberal candidates as "every man for himself and Palmerston for us all." But neither in my address to the Electors, nor in my speeches, could I endorse this sort of thing. I was a "Little Englander" then as I am a "Little Englander" now, not believing that it is really essential to our national honour, glory, or prosperity, to plunder and destroy other nations with whom we think fit to quarrel. I remember a farmer who belonged to the old Liberal Party saying that, although he would vote for me, he thought there was "too much of Cobden and Bright" in my address. This pleased me, for I thought Cobden and Bright were a head and shoulders above the political notabilities of that day, but I doubt whether such views helped my candidature, for Radicalism had hardly taken much root in the constituency of West Cumberland,

<sup>1</sup> Ralph Bernal-Osborne (1808-1882), M.P. for six constituencies.

and political battles were mainly a struggle between "Blues and Yellows"—the "Blues" being Liberals and the Tories "Yellows." This was a reversal of the usual respective political colouring, and I believe it arose from the livery of the Lowthers' servants being yellow.

'Our contest was carried on in the usual fashion of those times. It used to be said that the way to win elections was to secure, in good time, and before the enemy could do so, the lawyers, the conveyances, and the Public Houses. I hope and think that our side did not do much in the Public House line, and I rather think that there were so few "Blue" lawyers in the country that we could not spend very much over them. But the conveyances were a heavy item. I remember there was some dispute about the payment for a coach and four which was employed to drive persons over from Whitehaven to Cockermouth to hear the Declaration of the Poll, after all real work was over. I don't think that there was anything at all exceptionally extravagant in our contest, but rather the reverse, but I think that coach-and-four incident is rather a good illustration of how a candidate in those days was looked on as a kind of milch cow.

'It cannot be denied that the Ballot and other changes tending towards decorum in elections have at the same time destroyed for ever much of the fun connected with those electoral functions. Our children can have no conception of the wild excitement of the days of the hustings and of open voting. On Nomination day the rival parties used to appear on huge wooden erections; one on one side and the other on the other. The High Sheriff in formally opening the proceedings usually got a tolerable hearing, but the proposer and seconder of a Liberal candidate generally met with a tremendous uproar from the Tory crowd, which was reciprocated by the Liberal crowd when the Tory candidate came to be nominated. It seemed to be a point of honour that nobody should be heard. If political feeling ran high,



shouting was not sufficient, but the unhappy men on the hustings were pelted with flour, filth, and other missiles. What always amused me was, that we Candidates were expected to address the crowd as "Electors and non-electors," for I never could make out what the non-electors had to do with it. But this was a confusion of ideas on my part. The non-electors were not allowed to vote, but were expected to show their patriotism by pelting their fellow-citizens as explained above. Similarly in these days, women are not allowed to vote, but are encouraged to go to Primrose League and Liberal Federation meetings and to pelt their opponents with any language which seems fitting, or which comes handy.

'Our Nomination at this 1857 Election was at Cocker-mouth. It was not one as violent as some which I have seen later, but there was a fair amount of excitement, and some of the colliers who were employed by a "Yellow" coal-owner did their duty to their employer, and I am sure they thought to their country also, by promoting a certain amount of turbulence and tumult. It was the custom after the candidates had been nominated and the speeches made, for the High Sheriff—who was the returning officer for a County constituency—to call for a show of hands, to declare on whom it had fallen, and if, after that, a poll was demanded, to fix the day for such poll. I remember at this nomination rather an amusing incident in a small way. The show of hands was in my favour, whereupon the Sheriff, instead of declaring this to be the case, and waiting for a demand for a poll, declared that Wilfrid Lawson, Esq., was "duly elected" etc. This, however, proved not to be the case when the polling day arrived, for though we made a respectable fight, all things considered, the two Tory candidates were returned by a majority of between two and three hundred. General Wyndham was a few votes ahead of Captain Lowther, which was rather a surprise, as the Lowther influence was commonly supposed to be paramount in West Cumberland.'

Wilfrid Lawson was so long and so generally known as the unflinching advocate, in season and out of season, of an austere and unpopular cause, that some other aspects of his character have been completely overlooked. Few, I imagine, think of him as a fox-hunter, and yet hunting was one of the grand passions which swayed his earlier and middle life. On this point his own testimony is conclusive :—

‘After being defeated in the Liberal raid on West Cumberland I consoled myself considerably by hunting. I do not see anything really noble in galloping after a fox, but it is undeniably delightful. The *Saturday Review* once wrote that no amusement is long popular in England “which is not either unwholesome or wicked.” Fox-hunting may be the exception which proves the rule. I have sometimes said that no man is likely to be much excited again by anything, who has killed a fox in the open with his own hounds after forty minutes without a check, or who has won a contested election in the open voting days by a majority of less than two figures. I suppose hunting has seen its best days. The fiend who invented barbed wire struck at it its heaviest blow. But I doubt not that there are hundreds of young Englishmen who still feel towards it as I did when I was young.

‘In looking back I think perhaps the keenest delight which ever thrilled one was to look out of doors about ten on a winter’s night, when there was a suspicion of frost, and to find that there was a soft wind blowing, so that one could hunt the next day. Even now the very sight of a fox electrifies one, though to fall in with one casually is almost as rare as to fall in with a Radical.

‘About this time I had more or less acquaintance with the old Cumberland hunter, John Peel. Some people, I fancy, look upon him as a myth, or at least as a character about whom we have no reliable details, any more than we have about Nimrod. But this is a mistake. I believe there

is some foundation for everybody who becomes prominent in either national or local history. At any rate, I have seen John Peel in the flesh and have hunted with him.

‘There is a slight but interesting sketch of him by Mr. Bradley in “Highways and Byeways of Lakeland.” It quite coincides with all that I know about him. He was a tall, bony Cumbrian, who when I knew him used to ride a pony which he called Dunny, from its light colour, and on this animal, from his intimate knowledge of the country, he used to get along the roads and see a great deal of what his hounds did.’

Here it may be remarked that, when the famous song of ‘John Peel’ spread from its native Cumberland all over the fox-hunting world, and beyond it, people accustomed to the traditional scarlet thought it impossible that a Master of Hounds could have hunted in a grey coat, and therefore altered ‘his coat so grey’ to ‘his coat so gay.’ But the emendation was at once arbitrary and erroneous, as Lawson’s narrative shows.

‘His grey coat is no more a myth than himself, for I well remember the long, rough, grey garment which almost came down to his knees.’

In one respect at least it would appear that this highly unconventional Master must have been an uncongenial companion to his young follower and successor in command.

‘Mr. Bradley relates how a relative from whom he asked for information about John Peel told him that “when he was not hunting he was aye drinking.” This was probably rather too picturesque a way of putting it, but it recalls to my mind that one day when we were digging out a fox I happened to say or do something—I quite forget what—which appeared to indicate disapproval of drink, when he said in a tone of reproachful astonishment: “What, you’re not teetotal like

the old man!" meaning my Father. But no doubt drink played a prominent part—if it were not indeed the "pre-dominant partner"—in these northern hunts. I have heard John Peel say when they had killed a fox: "Now this is the first fox we've killed this season, and it munna be a dry un"—words of that kind being a prelude to an adjournment to the nearest public house, where the party of hunters would remain for an indefinite time, reaching—I have heard it said—even to days.

'Towards the latter part of his career his son, whom he used to call "Young John," generally had charge of the hounds, and he also was not a teetotaller, though possessed of many other good qualities. Once or twice he brought the hounds to one of our woods when he had had a good deal too much. This was represented to his father—old John Peel—and he was asked to see that it should not happen again, to which he replied, "What! What! I know he's nobbut a rubbish; but, if I get shot of this rubbish, where can I get sic another rubbish?"

'His hounds, which were kept by the neighbouring farmers, used to hunt hares in the beginning of the season, and generally came to our big woods to draw for a fox some time before Christmas. It was curious to see how the old hounds seemed to know what they had come for when put into the woods, and gave very little trouble with running hares, which were to be found there in tolerable numbers in the days before Harcourt's Bill.<sup>1</sup>

'What seemed to me rather strange was that the old Cumberland song, "D'ye ken John Peel?" was not particularly widely known for many years after John Peel died in 1854, but suddenly burst into popular favour and became fashionable in London dancing-rooms and in most places of joviality and festivity. There is a reason for everything, but the reason is often non-apparent. So it is here, I think.'

<sup>1</sup> The Ground Game Act, 1880.



In every attempt, however slight, to construct the story of a man's life, it is desirable to reproduce, as far as possible, the associations and surroundings, local and personal, in which he grew up. It is this consideration that gives relevance to the following sketch from Lawson's graphic pen :—

‘ One of the most eccentric, and in his way most entertaining characters whom I ever came across was a Cumberland Squire who lived some eight or nine miles from Brayton. I will only give his initials, “J. G.,” which will be recognised by the survivors of those Cambridge men who were at the University in his day, for I believe that his sayings and doings are a tradition there still. Certainly I do not suppose that there was ever any one like him.

‘ His peculiar gift was to tell the most astounding anecdotes of what had befallen him, and to tell them with the air as though he believed them, or expected that his audience would believe them. It was wonderful how their conception ever came into his mind, and indeed they were often in their way quite works of art. Especially brilliant was he in fastening on any weakness or peculiarity in any person well known in his circle and making it the basis of an irresistible anecdote.

‘ His contemporaries have passed and are passing away, and, as at one time I saw a good deal of him, it has struck me that I might record some of his strange tales. I doubt whether they will edify, but I feel sure that they will amuse the readers from the entirely peculiar flavour of their style.

‘ One frosty morning he rode over to Brayton to hunt, and told us that at his house, which was near Skiddaw, the frost was much more severe. So much so, he said, that his groom, on looking out of the stable door, saw a hare sitting not far off, and cried “Shoo,” but she did not move, and on going up to her he found that she was frozen to her seat. “But,” he said, “they brought her into the saddle-room and set her down by the fire and she soon thawed and ran away.”



‘ He had a small lake close to his house, and thus he described his exploit thereon one day. He said, “ My keeper and I were fishing and we pulled a pike into the boat, when, just as we were getting the hook unloosened, out flew a wild duck from its mouth, which the keeper shot, and, while we were picking it up, out flew another, and, as the keeper was not loaded, it got away. I *was* annoyed with the stupid fellow.”

‘ On another occasion he said he was shooting on the slopes at the foot of Skiddaw when he lost for some time a favourite and very steady old pointer which was out with him. By-and-by, in looking for it, he climbed over a wall, when up got a covey of partridges, and lo and behold, there was the pointer lying on its back with all its legs in the air. This he explained was because the dog had tumbled on its back in getting over the wall, and, just at that moment getting wind of the partridges, was too steady to alter the position in which it was found.

‘ I hardly know a story exactly to match this, except that of the man who said his dog could point game anywhere—on the road, in the street, in a crowd, anywhere—and that one day it stood stock still by the side of a man in Hyde Park. This somewhat puzzled him until he found out that the name of the man was “ Partridge.”

‘ But I must not digress from my Cumberland squire. At a dinner-party one day he told us of a man who at whist had never had a trump in his life. One of the company thought he would catch him, and said, “ What did he do when he dealt ? ” “ Oh,” he replied instantly, “ he always made a misdeal.”

‘ One hot summer he had a little black dog which went about with him, which he said had been white but had been turned black by the heat of the sun.

‘ Another time he told me that, standing at the door of his house one day during a violent storm of rain, some

ladies passed whom he invited in out of the rain, and who stayed for three weeks, and he never found out their names !

‘He used to relate curious adventures which had befallen him in London. He said that one night by some misadventure he was locked out of his hotel, and could not get in anywhere. But in passing along the street he espied an open window, through which he got, and finding a clean white bed, got in and slept soundly. In the morning an old woman came in and said, “Do you know where you are ?” “No,” he said. “Why,” she said, “you are in the smallpox hospital, and a man died in this bed yesterday.”

‘At another time he said he went to call on one Kibbel, at that time a well-known dealer in wild animals. He said that he knocked at the door, which was opened by Mrs. K., and when he asked if Stephen was in, she replied, “Mr. G., you’re too late. He cut his throat this morning, but if you like you can come up and see him.”

‘He said that once he wished to find someone who he believed was at Evans’ well-known establishment, and the waiter going into the supper-room called out, “Is Mr. G.’s friend here ?” “On which,” he said, “five and twenty men stood up.”

‘He described being at a railway-station one day, when he saw someone on the platform bowing to a passenger, on which he asked who it was, and was told it was the Prince of Wales, whereupon he said that he went up to the Prince and said, “Your Royal Highness, I beg your pardon, I knew your face but I forgot your name.”

‘One of our Squires in Cumberland was a remarkably thin man. G. declared that he went to his place but could not discover him for a long time, till at last he discovered him behind a rake in the hayfield !

‘At one time he gave out that he was going to be married, and a friend seeing him some time after said, “Why,

G., you're not married yet." "No," he replied, "I'm stumped out—she's dead."

'There were so many rooks, he said, in his neighbourhood and they were so keen upon the newly planted potatoes, that when he went into his own rookery, and clapped his hands, they would drop a sufficient number of potatoes to enable him to plant much of his land.

'One of the old Cambridge stories which I have heard about him is that when an undergraduate he was summoned before one of the University authorities to be dealt with for some peccadillo. As he smelt pretty strong of tobacco, the don said inquiringly, "Mr. G., do you smoke?" "Much obliged to you, sir," was the reply in the politest manner, "but not so early in the morning."

'I have now told enough—perhaps too many—stories about him, but as there is never likely to be a similar character I have thought them worthy of record. About the last of his prominent feats was to give evidence in a law-court in a trial touching the ownership of some Cumberland property. In his evidence he related a conversation which he had had in a certain year, but as it was proved that he could then have been only two or three years of age, his total collapse as a witness ensued, and I do not think that after that he made much figure in his native county or anywhere else.

'My notion of him is that when he began his career of story-telling he merely wished to amuse, but got on by degrees until he hardly knew what truth was.'

Lord Derby was now Prime Minister. Early in the Session of 1858, Palmerston had been moved by Orsini's murderous attack on the Emperor Napoleon to strengthen the law against Conspiracy to Murder. He was beaten by a combination of Tories and Radicals, and resigned; being succeeded in the premiership by Derby and in the leadership of the House of Commons by Disraeli. When Parliament

met for the Session of 1859, it was announced in the Speech from the Throne that 'the attention of the Legislature would be called to the state of the law regulating the Representation of the People.' In other words, a new Reform Bill was at hand.

On the 28th February, Disraeli unfolded the ministerial plan. It was a fanciful performance. The Government, said the Chancellor of the Exchequer, proposed, not to alter the limits of the franchise, but to introduce into Boroughs a new kind of franchise founded on personal property, and to give a vote to persons having property to the amount of 10*l.* a year in the Funds, Bank Stock, and East India Stock. Persons having 60*l.* in a Savings Bank would, under the Bill, be electors for the borough in which they resided; as also recipients of pensions in the naval, military, and civil services, amounting to 20*l.* a year. Lodgers, graduates, ministers of religion, solicitors, doctors, and schoolmasters were, under certain conditions, enfranchised, and the Government proposed to recognize the principle of identity of suffrage between the Counties and towns. Two members of the Government promptly resigned rather than be parties to these proposals. Lord John Russell moved an Amendment condemning interference with the franchise which enabled freeholders in Boroughs to vote for Counties, and demanding a wider extension of the suffrage in Boroughs. The Amendment was carried by a majority of thirty-nine, and Parliament was immediately dissolved. At this point I return to Lawson's narrative.

'Sir James Graham (my uncle) was the Liberal member for Carlisle, for which Borough he sat along with a Tory colleague, Mr. Nicholson Hodgson. I soon heard that the Carlisle Liberals, anxious to secure both seats, were likely to ask me to be the second candidate, along with my uncle. Accordingly, after a hard day's hunting I was roused from



my bed at Brayton, in the middle of the night, by a deputation of Liberals from a public meeting, who had come over eighteen miles, to ask me to stand. I, there and then—not exactly in my birthday suit, but in the robes of repose—had to furnish these good and staunch men with my Address for publication in the morning. To tell the truth, I was pretty well expecting something of this kind, so the Address was virtually ready. It satisfied my Liberal friends and back they drove to Carlisle to prepare for the contest. And a pretty stiff contest it was, carried on, of course, under open voting. Our young men know nothing of the wild excitement of such struggles—the influences brought to bear on the voters; (called “legitimate,” but generally really “illegitimate”); the intense interest with which the returns came out from the rival Committee Rooms, every hour or half-hour, saying how the poll stood; the lies which were told in everything connected with the Election; and the manœuvres and manipulations exercised on those electors who had not recorded their votes until a late hour of the day, can be remembered by old electioneers, but cannot be made clear to those of the present day.

‘I remember one incident in this election rather illustrative of how open voting worked. A leading citizen of Carlisle—a good man but not a strong man—who had made it to be understood that he was on our side, sent for me an hour or so before the Poll closed, to say that, as it appeared then that I had a majority, he hoped he might be released from voting. I forget now what I said, but my impression is that he voted. But it was rather a suggestive electioneering incident.

‘Sir James Graham was in great form at this election, and spoke with great vigour and effect. He was a very tall man, and as we were standing together on the Hustings he stooped down to say something to me; whereupon a friend of mine, who was in the crowd, heard a weaver say “Look! there’s the old crow giving the young ’un a worm.” I had

a great reverence for Sir James Graham. He was in my humble opinion one of the least appreciated men of our time. It may be said that family connexion and affection make me an unreliable witness. But when Lord Salisbury filled his Government with sons, sons-in-law and nephews, the defence was that he knew them better than any one else knew them; and it was not such a bad defence either as defences go.

‘It seemed to me that Sir James Graham’s actions—often wrong no doubt—were ever actuated by a desire for his country’s, and not for his own, advancement, and what higher credit can there be to a statesman? I believe he was the principal factor (after Cobden and Bright) in converting Sir Robert Peel to Free Trade—the only great political reform which in my day has been an absolute and complete success. I have heard Mr. Bright say that he was one of the cleverest men whom he ever met.

‘There was something pathetic in what Sir James Graham used to say himself; namely, that he knew, when he was gone, none of his reforms would be recollected, but that he would only be remembered as the man who opened the letters of the Italians.<sup>1</sup> And there was something in this, for Shakespeare never wrote two truer lines than when he said—

‘The evil which men do lives after them,  
The good is oft interred with their bones.

‘I wonder why this should be so. I suppose it is pleasanter

<sup>1</sup> *Annals of our Time*, June 14, 1844—‘Mr. T. Duncombe, M.P., presents a petition from M. Mazzini and three others, complaining that during the past month a number of their letters passing through the General Post Office, written for no political purpose, and containing no treasonable or libellous matter, had been regularly detained and opened. Sir James Graham (Secretary of State for the Home Department) replied that the Secretary of State had been invested by Parliament with the power, in certain cases, of issuing warrants directing letters to be opened. He vigorously defended his action, which was as vigorously attacked by Carlyle in *The Times* of the following day.

to hate persons than to love them. It is more exciting, and also puts you on an apparently higher moral plane. I always like Moore's lines :

‘ Thus, whether we’re on or we’re off,  
Some mystery seems to await thee :  
To love thee were pleasant enough,  
But oh ! ’tis delicious to hate thee.

‘ When the Election was won, and the Poll was declared from the Hustings in the Carlisle Market-Place, no one who was present will ever forget the scene. As far as the eye could reach, the Square and converging streets were crammed with the excited multitude. The figures were read out—Sir James stood forward. He waited for some minutes till the thunder of cheering had subsided. It must be remembered that one of the electioneering charges against him had been that he was a weathercock. Looking all around and looking up he said clearly and deliberately—“The weathercock is at the head of the Poll.” Such a yell of delight that followed I never heard before and shall never hear again. Then he proceeded—“The Yellow mist is dispelled—the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall—all is Blue overhead”—and so on.

‘ I followed with something or other, and then off we marched to the big room in the Coffee House where Sir James again thanked his supporters, and I also said my little say. Alluding to Mr. Hodgson, the defeated Tory Candidate, and how we should still keep an eye on him, I said that a gentleman saw a boy hitting another who was down, and remonstrated with him for hitting an antagonist who was down—to which the boy replied “Ah, but you don’t know how much trouble I had to get him down !”’

## CHAPTER II

## MEMBER FOR CARLISLE

THE new Parliament assembled on the 31st of May, 1859, and Wilfrid Lawson took his seat as junior Member for the City of Carlisle. I have been told by those who remembered his first appearance in the House that he was a very good-looking young man, smartly dressed according to the fashion of the day, with the 'Dundreary whiskers' and peg-top trousers which now only survive in the pages of *Punch*. He now began to keep his Parliamentary journal, and it records a cheerful and an active life.

'June 1. Dined at G. Moore's.<sup>1</sup> June 2. Was elected a Member of the Reform Club. Dined with Sir J. Graham. June 3. Dined at the Reform, and went to the Christy Minstrels. June 4. Went over to Salt Hill, and stayed there with Senhouse and the Scarsdales.<sup>2</sup> Saw the procession of Eton boats in the Evening. June 5. Attended Eton Chapel.'

'So now,' wrote Lawson in later life, 'I was fairly launched as a Member of Parliament. The Tories said I was "too young," although I was thirty years of age. But Tories always think Liberals too young or too old, and Liberals always think the same of Tories, though I don't know that age has much to do with it. "There's no fool like an old fool" is a pretty true saying and he has not

<sup>1</sup> George Moore (1806-1876), Cumbrian merchant and philanthropist.

<sup>2</sup> The third Lord Scarsdale married Blanche Senhouse, whose sister Mary afterwards married Sir Wilfrid Lawson. Sir Wilfrid, therefore, became uncle to Lord Curzon of Kedleston.





WILFRID LAWSON

1858

*From a Daguerreotype*



so much excuse. We were supposed to have a majority in the new House of Commons. I say supposed, because a Liberal majority is not like a Tory one—"without variable-ness or shadow of turning," but has always in it doubtful elements, of which you can't be quite sure till the Division comes.

' This is in the nature of things, and not to be unnecessarily complained of. The hackneyed saying in comparing Liberals to Tories is correct—"There are all sorts of ways of going on, but only one way of standing still."

' As usual also there were dissensions in the Liberal Party. A great effort was made to pull that Party together, and a meeting was called for the 3rd of June at Willis's Rooms. The trouble, I believe, was whether Palmerston or Lord John Russell was to be Prime Minister in the event of our turning out the Tories, and I well remember the burst of cheering when on Lord John Russell coming in and advancing to the platform, which was about two feet high, Lord Palmerston, who was already on it, extended his hand, and gave Lord John a slight help up. This, I suppose, was held to indicate unity. The meeting passed off well enough—a little grumbling (there could not be a Liberal meeting without some grumbling), but a general agreement that the great duty of the moment was to turn out the Tory Government. So Lord Hartington was entrusted with the amendment to the Address which if carried would effect this purpose.'

The Speech from the Throne was delivered by the Queen in person on the 7th of June. The Amendment to the Address, which Lord Hartington moved, was simply a declaration of want of confidence in the Ministers. 'He did it well,' writes Lawson, 'for, whatever one may think of Lord Hartington (now Duke of Devonshire) it must be admitted that he almost always talks common sense. The Debate raged for three or four nights. Disraeli made a great speech in defence of the

Government—"knocked heads together well," as Sir James Graham said to me. Indeed the perfection of Parliamentary party-speaking is vividly to point out how your opponents are divided among themselves, and a Tory speaker generally has a better opening in this direction than has a Liberal one.

'Rather strangely a good part of Disraeli's speech consisted in a violent attack on Sir James Graham for things which he had said at the Carlisle Election, and he humorously pretended to think that they had been said by me—"the young relative whom Sir James was introducing to his Constituents." This was all naturally very interesting and entertaining to me. A night or two afterwards Sir James replied, calling Disraeli "the Red Indian of Debate, who by the tomahawk had cut his way to power, and by the scalping knife would retain it." Also in that speech I well remember Sir James saying that he would now quote something or other which would refute and confute certain Tory statements. Then he felt in his pocket for the extract—not there; then he felt in another pocket—not there; then a third—the Tory jeers increasing after each fruitless search. Then suddenly, with a quiet "Oh, here it is" he produced it from the right pocket and proceeded to make effective use of it. Whether this was acting I know not, but if it was, it was very good acting.

'Lord Hartington's amendment was carried by thirteen. That was the first Division in which I voted. Ridiculous as it may seem, I perfectly well remember while pushing my way through the throng in the crowded lobby, the idea crossed me—was my watch safe? and this in the Liberal Lobby!

'So the Tory Government was turned out and a Liberal Government constituted with Palmerston as Prime Minister and Gladstone as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Charles Villiers and Milner-Gibson also in the Cabinet as a kind of

hostages to ensure the good conduct of the Radicals. But Cobden was not in the new Government, although he was offered a place in it. Some of us had a long conversation with him in connexion with this refusal, and his account of his interview with Palmerston was very interesting, showing the latter in a very genial light; for when Cobden hinted that he had said hard things about Palmerston formerly, the old Lord replied that "in politics personalities should never be remembered beyond three months," and likewise that "Gibson had hit him quite as hard." I am not sure whether Mr. Cobden told us himself, or whether I heard it at second hand, that when Palmerston was trying to get him into the Government, and meeting all Cobden's objections in a light and airy way—Cobden at length said: "But, my Lord, I am in earnest." That closed the conversation. Palmerston, I should think, would look on earnestness in politics as the one unpardonable sin, as it is often looked upon now.

As the Session advanced we saw gradually how much in the way of Reform we were likely to get from this Government, which virtually came into power on the cry of Reform. I don't think that as a rule any English Government, whatever its Party title may be, is very keen about reforming anything, and will only—probably *can* only—do it when somebody or other outside is kicking up a fearful row. I see in my Parliamentary Journal that we, however, carried the Second Reading of the Church Rates Abolition Bill by a majority of seventy, but that Mr. Gladstone was one of those who voted against the Bill.

In this Parliament the great champion of economy was Mr. Williams, commonly called "the Viscount"—for what reason I forget—who used to work away after the manner of Joe Hume—probably a long way "after" him.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> William Williams (1789–1865), M.P. for Coventry 1835–1847, and for Lambeth 1850 to death. 'When in Parliament, he took a second and



House used to laugh at him, but I believe these economists do good. They never, or hardly ever, succeed in reducing a vote which has been once proposed, but it is probable that they put a check on a good deal of extravagant expenditure being proposed. At least, they used to do so. At present public economy—what we used to call “retrenchment”—is a lost virtue, and Parliament, People, and Press revel in the most wasteful expenditure which can be conceived.

‘So far as my Parliamentary Journal goes this does not seem to have been a particularly interesting Session. But one could see the beginning even then of the determination to carry on the mad rivalry of armaments with other nations; Horsman being perhaps the most vigorous agitator in that direction.’ I used to think him a splendid speaker; the best in the House after Bright and Gladstone. His speeches, most carefully prepared, were vigorous, ornate, and telling, and to my idea most mischievous. In fact he was a regular and successful panic-monger;—a kind of statesman which I think the English people love.

‘It should be remembered to Mr. Disraeli’s credit, that, amid all the panic-mongery of this Session, he advocated a mutual arrangement among the Powers for disarmament. When one thinks of this and of the various plans and suggestions of those days for doing some good, and then thinks how so many of them are still not much forwarder than they were then, one is impressed by the staunch, solid, stolid hatred to change which dominates our people. One should never expect any reform to come rapidly. Illustrating the futility of prophesying anything of the kind, I find in my Parliamentary

active part with Joseph Hume in lessening estimates, which course he continued after Hume’s death, obtaining the sobriquet of “Smollett.” He was also known as “Punch’s Wiscount.”—*Boase’s Modern English Biography*.

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. Edward Horsman (1807–1876), M.P. for Cocker-mouth 1836–1852; for Stroud 1853–1868; for Liskeard 1869 to death.

Journal that I wrote, with references to some conversation on Locomotives on roads, "It seems there is every probability of locomotives soon being useful in this way." This was in 1859 and where are we now? Our rate of progress reminds me of the American who called up the guard of the train: "Guard," he said, "did you ever see a snail?" "Of course I have," said the guard. "Then I'm sure you must have met it. You would never overtake it!"

'There was one rather amusing discussion one night as to the style of architecture which was to be employed on the Foreign Office. All the experts talked largely and wisely about the different "Orders," which gave Palmerston an opportunity of telling a story. He said—a gentleman going along the street saw a workman, engaged on a handsome building. He asked the man what Order it was;—to which he replied "It's Mr. Jones's positive order." These little airy nothings of Palmerston used to please the House.'

We now approach the Session of 1860. The Prince Consort wrote: 'Gladstone is now the real Leader of the House of Commons, and works with an energy and vigour altogether incredible.' Certainly the vigour and the energy were remarkable enough; but, in his judgment on the leadership of the House, the Prince seems to have overlooked the peculiar power of restraining, and when necessary defeating the Chancellor of the Exchequer which Palmerston possessed and did not scruple to use.

The Budget of 1860 was marked by two distinctive features. It asked the sanction of Parliament for the Commercial Treaty which Cobden, acting in the first instance on his own responsibility, had privately arranged with the Emperor Napoleon; and it proposed to abolish the Duty on Paper. By the Commercial Treaty, France undertook to remove all prohibitory duties on British manufactures, and to reduce the duties on our raw materials; while England was to abolish

duties on foreign manufactures, and to reduce the duties on foreign wines. The Duty on Paper was a heavy tax on knowledge. To abolish it would be to make the production of all books easier and cheaper, and particularly to quicken the development of cheap newspapers. Vague alarms were aroused. Obscurantism and reaction did their best to perplex the public mind. All the forces which dread the spread of knowledge among the great masses of mankind took up arms against Gladstone's proposals, and made common cause with the manufacturers of paper, and the proprietors of expensive newspapers. Manufacturers and proprietors organized themselves in defence of their lucrative monopolies. The Commercial Treaty was extremely popular with the Liberal Party, but the abolition of the Paper-Duty was regarded with mixed feelings; and these two provisions of the Budget were the principal centres of interest and excitement in the Session of 1860.

'The Session was marked,' says Lawson, 'by one or two incidents of considerable Parliamentary and political interest. Before going into them I may mention that I find in my diary an entry on June 28. "An Hon. Member appeared this evening in a wide-awake hat." Now there are plenty of them among the Irish and working-men members. That reminds me also how in Speaker Brand's day, a friend of mine, having just come up from the country, went straight to the House in a velvet coat, on which the Speaker said to him very courteously as he passed the Chair—"Mr. F——, have you been shooting?" These trifles show how the old order changeth.

'Perhaps the most important business of the Session was Cobden's French Treaty. Of course such a step as that in the direction of Free Trade was met with much opposition. Free Trade seems to me to be an essential part of real freedom; for it is merely permitting men to make the most of their



powers of production. To prevent them doing so is, as far as it goes, to enslave them.

"I don't suppose that anybody who has been in public life so long as I have, has been less what is called "behind the scenes." During the short time that I was in the House along with Sir James Graham, I learned from him more of the unseen currents and influences than I ever did after his death. He "knew the game" so perfectly; and from what I could gather at this time about the Treaty, I concluded that Palmerston disliked it, and that it was Gladstone's enthusiasm for it which kept it alive, and ultimately carried it through. The whole thing got mixed up with a great distrust of Louis Napoleon. He had just then got hold somehow or other of Savoy and Nice (if I remember right) and we used to have, almost weekly, tremendous orations from Horsman, Sir Robert Peel<sup>1</sup>, and Kinglake,<sup>2</sup> making him out to be a villain of the deepest dye—which he probably was—and virtually inciting the country to make war on him, rather than to make a treaty with him. It has always seemed to me a curious idea, that it is our duty to fight with all the wicked people in the world. As I write, I remember how I dealt with this once in the House. I was criticizing the Ashanti War, and after quoting a clergyman, who had expressed his delight at our "attacking the stronghold of Satan," I remarked that "if we were to attack all the strongholds of Satan, we should require Supplementary Estimates." I was told afterwards that this was the only occasion on which Disraeli was seen to laugh in a Debate in the House.

'But these three Savoyards—Horsman, Peel, and Kinglake—were a remarkable but very different trio. Horsman's eloquence was of the old-fashioned, ornate, almost mystic, style. Sir Robert Peel used to roll out telling sentences with what was certainly the finest voice in the House, though one

<sup>1</sup> Third Baronet (1822–1895), M.P. for Tamworth 1850–1880.

<sup>2</sup> A. W. Kinglake (1809–1891), M.P. for Bridgewater 1857–1869.

was sometimes—far from always—tempted to say “*Vox et præterea nihil.*” While Kinglake, the Crimean Historian—called the “Seer of Bridgewater,” from the place he represented—used to remind one exactly of an old prophet who, with eyes uplifted to Heaven, in low, slow, monotonous accents foretold the dreadful doom which was coming upon the country. However, we got through the Session without going to war with anyone in order to promote Christianity and civilization, and I was always pleased when we got through a Session without doing that.

‘We also carried Gladstone’s Budget, the principle of which was, by increasing the Income Tax to diminish indirect taxation, and thus set free and stimulate legitimate business.

‘The great fight was over the Repeal of the Paper-Duties, which was carried in the Commons by so small a majority that the Lords took heart of grace and threw it out in their House. Then we had a fine hullabaloo in the Commons. Gladstone said it was a “gigantic innovation,” whereupon, we Radicals cheered as long as our breaths held out. But the end of all the tall talk and excitement was that Palmerston added a Resolution—not of very much meaning one way or another—but virtually telling the Lords that they had better not do it again.

‘During this Session the Lords also threw out the Church Rates Abolition Bill, which we had sent up to them. I was much pleased by these Lordly performances, for I thought that they would certainly produce a demonstration among the People to stop the Lords from thus interfering with the Commons. But not a bit of it. I little knew then how willingly and cheerfully the English people submit to be kicked by the Lords. They continually remind me of the man, who had a black eye, of which he boasted greatly “because it had been given him by a Lord”! We are a wonderful people. We talk about liberty, self-government, and even equality. We take a fearful amount of trouble to

elect those men who are to govern us. I believe a General Election costs about a million of money, and the cost in additional illegitimate efforts, lies, liquor, etc. is untold. Then, when they get their Parliament elected, they allow a few hundred men, who have not been either elected or selected, but have merely taken the trouble to be born, to overthrow anything that the Parliament has done, if they are so minded. I say "anything," but that is wrong, for the House of Commons has had the pluck to maintain the raising of the taxes in its own hands, and the attempt thus made by the House of Lords to get that also into its power was what Mr. Gladstone truly called a "gigantic innovation."

' We also had a Reform Bill this Session—a very mild one—which was ultimately withdrawn. Liberal members to a great extent occupied themselves by making long speeches *about* it—I could not say exactly *for* it, and although the Second Reading was carried without a Division, I find in my Journal I describe it as being talked to death. Bernal Osborne described it better by saying it suffered from "political assassination." That reminds me that, when Gladstone during the Session had to postpone the day for bringing in his Budget, as his throat was affected; Bernal Osborne said: "Ah, I know the Income Tax is sticking in his throat." This Reform Bill did not include the Ballot. I was always an enthusiast for the Ballot, and when Henry Berkeley<sup>1</sup> brought in his usual motion in its favour, I thought it a good opportunity to make my Maiden Speech. I was not like one of the Metropolitan Members, who told his Constituents that he had "made several Maiden Speeches," which was rather in the same line as the man who, answering a question before a Parliamentary Committee, said he had seen the Lord Mayor's show "hundreds of times"!

' But my Maiden Speech was on this wise. Henry Berkeley made his usual good speech, and the usual arguments against

<sup>1</sup> F. H. F. Berkeley (1794–1870), M.P. for Bristol 1837 to death.



him had been used. I had my speech all ready, I remember one phrase of which I was rather proud. Alluding to the absence of the Ballot from Lord John Russell's Reform Bill, I said, "I would rather have the Ballot without the Bill than the Bill without the Ballot," which certainly was my decided opinion. It was getting on towards 7 o'clock and I said to the Member sitting next me, an Irish Lord whose name I forget at this moment, "Do you think they would hear me if I got up?" "Oh yes," he said, "they would hear you as a new Member." So I took the plunge, like an inexperienced bather taking a header into the water of which he knows not the depth, the shallows, or the currents. The fact was that, like a perfect fool, I had got up at the sacred dinner-hour. Now no one would be listened to at that hour—not even an angel from Heaven—no one except a great Party leader. So, after I had spoken for two or three minutes, they began to murmur, then to cry "Divide," and then to yell in lusty chorus. However I struggled on and said what little I had to say; the performance lasting, I fancy, about fifteen or twenty minutes. It was not cheerful or encouraging, but it pleased me to lay the blame on that Irish Lord who advised me to get up! The next day Mr. Henry Berkeley said to me "They behaved very badly to you last night, but you know beasts are always most noisy at feeding time." I once heard him lay a trap for the House very successfully. When making a speech on the Ballot, he said: "All the American States have the Ballot except Virginia and there they say 'Let a man come up openly in the face of day and declare himself.'" At this the Tories cheered gleefully. Berkeley waited till they had done, and then proceeded: "Then, say the Virginians, 'Let one of those infernal abolitionists come up, and we'll tar and feather him.'"

A man's Maiden Speech in Parliament is an event which deserves some special commemoration in the story of his life.

I therefore append to Lawson's modest account of his own performance the version given by William White,<sup>1</sup> from 1854 to 1875 Door-keeper of the House of Commons, and anonymous author of 'The Inner Life of the House of Commons.'

Writing on the 31st of March, 1860, he says 'From the bottom of our hearts we pitied Mr. Wilfrid Lawson when he arose to deliver his Maiden Speech to the House. Mr. Lawson is the son of a daughter of the late Sir James Graham, and therefore the present Sir James's nephew. He is also the colleague of Sir James in the representation of Carlisle, which place he was elected to represent in Parliament in 1859. But, though thus nearly related to the "Netherby Knight" by blood, there cannot be much political sympathy between him and his uncle; for Mr. Lawson is a Radical of the advanced school, whereas Sir James, whatever he may be just now, is certainly not that. Well, on the night when Mr. Berkeley brought in the customary Bill for the Ballot, Mr. Lawson determined to deliver his Maiden Speech. It was a ticklish time for Mr. Lawson, no doubt, and one to which he had looked forward with no small anxiety; but still there were not wanting encouragements. First, he knew that it is the practice of the House to listen with courtesy and patience to a new Member; secondly, he was not an unpractised speaker; for, though he had not before spoken in the House, he had often addressed popular assemblies outside, and with success; and, thirdly, he was well prepared, had studied his subject, arranged his arguments, and set his notes in due order. But, alas! Mr. Wilfrid Lawson had reckoned without his host. There was one thing which he had forgotten, and on this he was wrecked. He had forgotten that he might possibly have to rise near the dinner-hour, and that, when men are rabidly hungry, they are never courteous. It was past seven when Mr. Lawson arose, and

<sup>1</sup> (1807-1882.)

for some time the House had been restless and noisy. Hardly would it listen to Mr. Marsh, whilst he showed how the Ballot had failed in Australia. Still less courtesy did it award to Mr. Fortescue when he spoke ; and when Mr. Lawson arose, though there were faint cries of " New Member," its patience was utterly exhausted. Nor is this surprising. Usually the House is very courteous to new Members ; but hunger, all over the world, overrides courtesy. At the moment when Mr. Lawson arose, a hundred tables—in the Dining Room, at the Clubs, and in private houses, were decked with damask and plate ; a hundred cooks were looking with anxiety to their spits, and waiting impatiently for the signal " to dish " ; and twice a hundred servants were at their posts, listening for the carriage-wheels and impetuous knocks of masters and guests. And, more than this, there were actually present between 300 and 400 hungry men, who knew all this, and, more impatient than cooks or footmen, were anxious to rush away and dine. Is it wonderful, then, that, when Mr. Lawson arose, all the courtesy which usually waits upon new Members failed ? Not at all. Men will, as we know from scores of fearful narratives, eat one another when hard pressed by hunger. " Why, hang it ! " said a score of loungers in the lobby and at the Bar, " here's another man up." " Who is he ? " " Why, it's ' Old Jimmy's nephew,' and they say he's a new Member, and we must hear him." " Oh, hang your new Member ! He should choose a better time ; are we to have our dinner spoiled through his impertinence ? Come, let's put him down." And so the row began ; and what a row ! It began at the Bar ; it was echoed from the back of the Chair, where other impatient malcontents had clustered ; it was taken up all along the Conservative benches. Even on Mr. Lawson's own side of the House it was not less furious ; and from the galleries above it poured down upon his head. It was not merely a cry of " Divide, 'vide, 'vide ! " but a regular storm of groans, and cheers, and laughter, and



indescribable noises. For a time Mr. Lawson stood it bravely, occasionally speaking, and at other times looking round with a sort of deprecatory and imploring look ; but it was of no use. When he spoke, his words were drowned in the storm, and bursts of laughter met his patient and imploring looks. And so, in about five minutes, the Hon. Member wisely sat down, pocketed his notes, and postponed his *début* as a speaker to a more favourable time. We, however, who marked the scene, augur favourably of Mr. Lawson ; for we could not help noting that he possesses at least one qualification necessary to a speaker in the House—namely, calm self-possession.’

Lawson now resumes his narrative.

‘ It was during this Session that the great Prize Fight took place between Tom Sayers and Heenan.<sup>1</sup> There was great excitement over it, and a subscription for Tom Sayers was got up in the Lobby, to which, I believe, Palmerston gave his guinea. I have tried to think of an appropriate moral remark to make on this, but have failed to find the right one, so the reader must draw it for himself.

‘ One thing which interested me considerably during this Session was Gladstone’s measure for giving Licensing facilities for the Sale of Wines to Refreshment-Houses. It met with considerable opposition. The Liquor-Sellers wished to keep their monopoly to themselves, and the Temperance people, objecting to increased facilities for drinking, joined in the opposition, whereupon the *Times* newspaper said that the measure was attacked by a “combination of knaves and fools.” Here again I must leave it to the intelligent reader to decide which were the knaves and which were the fools. Strangely enough Mr. Gladstone advocated the step partly on the ground that women might go to these places and be kept from Public Houses. Forty years have gone by, and

<sup>1</sup> At Farnborough. April 17, 1860.

there has not been a year, I should think, in which great complaints have not been made that these "Grocer's Licenses," as they are called, have been the means of tempting women to drinking and drunkenness. Especially do Tory Temperance speakers delight to denounce Gladstone's Grocer's Licenses—as indeed they well may.

'In those days, we Radicals used to form little bodies with a desire of helping things forward, but as a rule they did not come to much. Then I find in my Diary, June 18, "Attended a meeting of the Parliamentary Reform Committee, to discuss the desirability of winding up the concern. Nobody seemed to know what to say or do, and at last the meeting was adjourned to meet again within a month." What happened then, I know not.

'I find that in the last words of my Parliamentary Journal for 1860, I describe this Ministry as "the most extravagant and the most subservient to the aristocracy, which this country has seen for many a year." David used to say things "in his haste." Perhaps I wrote this in haste, but more probably in disgust and disappointment. In the early days, "nourishing a youth sublime," we really expect that things will be *done*; little knowing the tremendous powers which are always at hand to prevent anything being done, and often at the very moment when things look most hopeful and encouraging. Tom Moore writes:—

Has Hope, like the bird in the story  
That flitted from tree to tree  
With the Talisman's glittering glory,  
Has Hope been that bird unto thee?  
On branch after branch alighting,  
Did she the bright gem display—  
And when nearest and most inviting  
Then waft the fair gift away?

'I suppose most people will answer "yes" to that query; yet Hope, though the most deceitful creature in the world,

is that which alone makes the world tolerable. "Hope everything, expect nothing" is not a bad maxim.

'Lord Dufferin, after he had been two days in India, explained at a public dinner, that he was not yet quite ready to write a book about India. Perhaps after only two Sessions, I was not very well qualified to give an opinion about the House of Commons. However, as my opinion of it, formed then, has not very much altered through long years of further experience, I will give it here for what it is worth.

'I think it is a magnificent public assembly and truly representative of the People, both as regards their virtues, their vices, and their follies, and what more can you expect from a representative Assembly?

'I remember hearing of a representative in one of the Western American Legislatures, who was reproached with being rather too fond of liquor; to which he replied: "Well, I'm never too drunk to represent my Constituents"!

'Moreover, the House in itself is a regular republic. There is no place where a man is "summed up" so quickly and so accurately as in the House of Commons,—a humbug is detected as though by instinct. The talk about wealth, birth, and position getting a man on may be true as regards appointments to office, but they weigh nothing as regards the House of Commons estimate of a man. There he is taken for what he is and for nothing else. A "bore" is detected as soon as a humbug, but there is less toleration shown to the bore because he is less amusing. Then the perfect good-humour of the House is very charming. I do not think that, in all the years that I was a Member, there were more than one or two instances in which anyone said anything to me which I should call intentionally rude; and this is saying a good deal, when it is remembered that I was, from the beginning on to the end a fanatic, a faddist, and an "extreme man"—all phases of humanity most repulsive to respectable and orthodox people, such as largely compose the House of Commons.

‘After all, one of the things which has always puzzled me a good deal in this puzzling world, is, why people should rage so furiously against one another on politics and on religion. Opinion is, and ought to be, sacred. Nobody has a right to interfere with any man, on account of his expression of opinion. Well, in politics, many persons think that State Churches, standing armies, and national drink-shops are sources of freedom, honour, and happiness to the nation, which maintains them. I hold the exact reverse, but who knows which of us is right?’

‘Life consists in “guesses at truth,” and my Tory friends have just as much right to guess, as I have, and to act on their guesses. The only thing which really riles one is, when you have reason to believe that they are not acting on their honest opinion. But here again, who knows whether a man is honest or not? We have no mental Röntgen Rays. A man’s thought is the only possession which you cannot, by any means, discover, annex, or purloin. In this connexion, however, I remember that we once had in the House a Liberal Member, who, being very deaf, used to go across occasionally to the Tory side of the House, with his trumpet, to hear the speeches delivered in that quarter, and this the Tories rather resented; saying, “What business has he to come here to hear what we are ‘thinking about.’”’

‘Why one set of people’s ideas about religion should be so irritating to another set is still more perplexing.

‘The great Christian communities profess to believe the same main doctrine, but differ on secondary points; yet they generally lead a kind of hedgehog existence, with bristles always ready to show themselves against each other. Why is this?’

‘From the North we have three roads to London:—the London and North Western, the Midland, and the Great Northern. If a man prefers the Great Northern or the Midland, while I patronize the London and North Western,



I never think of quarrelling with him on that account. Why, then, should there be any friction between those who may respectively travel towards Heaven by Episcopalian, Congregational, or Methodist modes of conveyance? The Methodist or Congregational coach may not be so smooth and well-appointed as the Episcopalian ones, but if it keeps time and duly reaches the desired Terminus I cannot see any cause for friction. Surely there is no necessity for this kind of stand-offishness among the sects. I think the sailor, who was present at one of Spurgeon's sermons, made a mistake. Spurgeon asked all who wished to go to Heaven to stand up, but he alone kept his seat. "My man," said Spurgeon, "do you not wish to go to Heaven?" "Yes," said the sailor, "but not with such a crew as this!"

'Some time or other,—perhaps many centuries hence,—it will probably be recognized that John Stuart Mill spoke the truth, when he said:—"The idea that one man is responsible for another man's religion is at the root of most of the troubles in the world"—or words to that effect.

'As this book is a kind of disjointed, disconnected, desultory disquisition on my doings, I perhaps should mention that in this year, 1860, I fell into matrimony.<sup>1</sup> I entered the Church alone, between a line of Volunteer soldiers, and came out of it through the same line, along with my wife. This recalls to one's recollection the text which was inscribed on the tomb of a deceased couple:—"Their warfare is accomplished." But fortunately my wedding venture did not result in hostilities, but peace; for, though my wife had been brought up in the strictest sect of the Tories, she never found it necessary to assume an aggressive attitude in such matters, but quite the reverse.

'There is sometimes a want of tact, which imperceptibly leads to trouble. A wife was once complaining to a clergy-

<sup>1</sup> Wilfrid Lawson married November 12, 1860, Mary, third daughter of Joseph Pocklington-Senhouse, of Netherhall, Cumberland.



man of her husband's unsatisfactory conduct, when he said: "You should heap coals of fire on his head." To which she replied, "Well, I tried boiling water, and that did no good"! But I am not going to descant longer on the mysterious Marriage-question, but the reader may turn to a book, which I have not read, but which is entitled "How to be happy though married." Nevertheless I think "the better half" is a very good name for a wife. Some of them perhaps do not do the right thing at the right time. For instance: at an inquest not long since, the wife gave evidence that she went into the barn and saw her husband hanging. "Did you cut him down?" said the coroner. "No," she replied, "he wasn't dead"!

'I may mention that Sir James Graham attended my wedding; one of the latest functions in which he took part before his death. I remember about that time, staying with him, at Netherby. He drove me out in a light open carriage, and, on coming round a corner, a drunken man in a dog-cart drove into us. It was touch and go which carriage went over, but the drunkard's was rather the lighter, and over he went, and lay peacefully in the ditch. After he had been attended to, we drove on and Sir James said: "What a sensation it would have made if both the Members for Carlisle had been killed!" and then added, reflectively, "yet the next day nobody would have thought of anything, except who was to replace them." How true!

'One of the horrible things in the House of Commons is to go there and see someone night after night, sitting near you, or opposite you—someone with whom you may have a passing acquaintance, or more,—then to get up some morning, and read in the papers that he is gone. "The place which knew him, knows him no more for ever." Yet everything goes on just the same—why shouldn't it? and the whole thing reminds you of nothing so much as the proverbial stone dropped into the water—a little splash, a slight ripple, and eternal silence.'

The Session of 1861 was signalized by Mr. Gladstone's practical repartee to the high-handed action of the Lords in the matter of the Paper-Duty. Instead of dividing the proposals of his Budget, as in previous years, into several Bills, he incorporated them all, including the repeal of the Paper-Duty, in a single Bill. By this device the House of Lords was forced to acquiesce in what it had in the previous Session condemned, or else to incur the responsibility of rejecting the whole financial scheme for the year.

‘Now I must deal a little with the Session of 1861, my third Session. The *Times* newspaper predicted of it that it would be a Session in which no great changes would be wrought—in short a “non-political Session.” When people talk about Parliament acting in a non-political way, they mean acting in an apathetic, indolent, and probably insincere way. For if a Legislative Assembly is not to be political, I know not what it ought to be.

‘However, the *Times* prediction was not far out of the way. We did not do much. Still there was a Bankruptcy Bill carried by Bethell,<sup>1</sup> who described it as “a Bill which not six Members in this House have read and which not half that number understand.”

‘But the main work of the Session was the Repeal of the Paper-Duty, which was an essential part of Gladstone's Budget, and which to get the better of the Lords, he sent up to them in one Bill, along with the other financial arrangements for the year. This move irritated the Tories immensely, for naturally nothing is dearer to a true Tory than the House of Lords. They almost gnashed their teeth at the thought of Gladstone overcoming them by this ingenious manœuvre, and the Debates on the measure in its various stages

<sup>1</sup> Richard Bethell (1800–1873), M.P. for Aylesbury, and for Wolverhampton. Created Lord Westbury 1861. Lord Chancellor 1861–1865.

were, I think, the most bitter which I ever saw in the House until Home Rule became a question of practical politics.

‘Lord Robert Cecil (afterwards Lord Salisbury) was very prominent in these Debates, and I find in my Journal I continually refer to the insolence and impertinence of his speeches. So that I rather anticipated Disraeli, who, in later years described him as “a master of gibes, and flouts and sneers.” I think that it was in this Session that he likened Mr. Gladstone to a pettifogging attorney (by the way, I have no idea what pettifogging is), and when this was resented, he said, a few nights after, that he wished to “apologize”—immediately the House began to cheer, when he added—“to the attorneys.” What an awful thing it would have been considered had a Liberal acted thus! but my experience of politics is that a Tory may steal a horse, while a Liberal may not look over the hedge. However, one would not characterize Lord Salisbury’s speeches as “impertinent” now, though they are often perfectly delightful in the polished and scarcely concealed contempt for the people whom it is his lot to address. In spite of all that the Tories could do, we carried the measure for the Repeal of the Paper-Duty, and I see in my Journal I expressed the hope that we should “hear no more of the Paper-Duty for the rest of our natural lives.” And for my part I do not think I have.

‘The last set speech which Sir James Graham ever delivered in the House was in support of this Paper-Duty Repeal, and in the course of it, he said: “If the Opposition like to go to the country on the cry of ‘up with the Lords and down with the Commons,’ I, for one, shall have no doubt as to the result.” I like to remember that the last speeches in the House, both of Sir James Graham and of Mr. Gladstone, were made against that most absurd and mischievous of all institutions—the House of Lords.

‘It was in one of these debates also, that Sir John

Ramsden<sup>1</sup> introduced, somehow, America (then in the throes of her Civil War) and declared that the "great American bubble had burst." This elicited tremendous and long-continued cheering. But we need not be hard on Sir John Ramsden for did not Gladstone himself say, not long after, that Jefferson Davis had "made an army, made a navy, and made a nation" ?<sup>2</sup>

'Rather an interesting incident in this Session was a tie in a Division on the Third Reading of the Church Rates Abolition Bill. The Speaker seemed taken aback, but after a bit, said the "Noes" had it, but I believe he should have given it to the "Ayes," so that the House might have another opportunity of expressing its opinion on the question "that the Bill do pass."

'In this Session what we used to call "Religious Wednesdays" were very common, when private members had a chance of debating various Bills, dealing with Church Rates, University Tests, Oaths, Burials, &c. ; all tinged more or less with Ecclesiasticism. I was sitting by an old Member one day, when one of these Bills was being discussed ; and he said to me : "Do you understand all these different religions ? I don't, they're so thundering complicated." I have often thought of the remark, and wondered if many people understand even their own religion. Yet how positive they all are that all the others are wrong !

"Most confident of what they're least assured."

'One day in this Session, Cavour's death was being alluded to, when the O'Donoghue<sup>3</sup> said that he saw in it "the finger of Providence." It is wonderful how readily people enlist Providence on their side. But an old Scotch farmer, whose harvesting had been delayed for some weeks

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for the West Riding.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 56.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel O'Donoghue (1833-1889), M.P. for Tipperary.



by bad weather, remarked that, "with another fine day he would be out of the power of Providence"!

There was some talk in this Session about a grant of money, which Lord Palmerston had given to a Westmorland poet, named Close. Of course he had been misled and misinformed, for the man was an absurd creature, who used to write at times abusing, and at times toadying, the local gentry. I remember one of his verses describing his entertainment by a relation of mine, famed for his generous and free-handed hospitality :

‘ Next I dined at Edenhall,  
The noblest hall in all the land ;  
Two footmen stood behind my chair,  
A bottle in each hand !

‘ Another incident was that a Member was brought out of a lunatic asylum to take part in a close party Division. Roebuck brought the matter before the House. The fact was admitted, but the defence was that he was not madder than the other Members !

‘ Before the end of the Session, Lord John Russell left us and descended into the House of Lords. I remember talking about this to Sir James Graham and expressing some surprise. " Oh," he said ; " he's ashamed to stay here " ; meaning, I suppose, that he had got into such a false position with his abortive Reform Bills—Palmerston, in the background, laughing at and thwarting them—that the " position " was too unpleasant for him. While we were thus conversing, I mentioned that Lord John was going that afternoon to the Guild-hall to take farewell of his constituents. (Fancy the City *ever* having been represented by a Liberal!) There was nothing particular going on in the House, so Sir James said, " You had better go and hear him." So I went. When I came back, Sir James asked what he had said. I replied, that he had compared himself to the great Spanish Emperor, who abdicated and went into a monastery. " Well," said Sir



James, "that was always considered a very silly thing to do."

'I soon after went to see him take his seat in the Lords and find the scene thus described in my Journal—"Lord John Russell took his seat in that Assembly after a great deal of marching about in an absurd costume, escorted by other figures of fun; all of them bowing to Bethell (the Lord Chancellor) who, in return, took his cocked hat off the top of his wig and condescended to look graciously on the new Peer, finally being so good as to shake hands with him." Fancy grown-up men enjoying all this.

'As to Lord Russell; during the time that I had an opportunity of being with him in the House of Commons, I could hardly understand how he had won his great name and fame. In my day there was nothing at all attractive about his appearance, voice, manners or mode of speech—nothing, at least, calculated to "enthuse" anyone—nothing, apparently, sympathetic about him. Still, I doubt not that the public appreciation of him was right. His fame was made in the old days when privilege, abuse, and corruption were rampant, when it was far more difficult to be a Whig than it is now to be a Radical, and when he stood out boldly—not like a Lord, but like a man—for popular rights and liberties.

'Before Parliament met in 1862 Sir James Graham died, so he disappears from these records, and as I have already expressed my high appreciation of his character, I need not dwell on his decease. But his departure left a great gap in the House. Whenever he spoke he was listened to with the greatest attention, as everybody knew that he was not influenced by Party feeling or personal motives, but addressed himself solely to the merits of the question. Whatever may be thought of his opening the Foreign Revolutionists' letters—to which I have before alluded—I think it must be admitted that his services in encouraging and supporting Peel in his Free Trade measure, outweighed much with which critics might be

disposed to find fault. At any rate in my opinion he was the greatest man Cumberland ever produced.

'The seat vacated at Carlisle by his death was won by Mr. Edmund Potter'—a Lancashire manufacturer—after a severe struggle. A curious thing happened at the Poll. When it was closed, the Tories thought they had a majority of one, and marched in delight to the Hustings, to shout over their victory. But in a few minutes the report went round that *we* had the majority, and off we started to the Hustings, meeting the disappointed Tories returning from that vantage ground. Mr. Potter was my colleague for many years, and we got on capitally. I think that perhaps sometimes he felt that he was "unequally yoked" with a too "pushful" Radical, but he was a sound Liberal himself, and we never quarrelled.

'During the recess there was a tremendous row in the country over what was called the "*Trent* Affair," which was the seizure by the American Federals of two Confederate emissaries—Mason and Slidell—on board an English ship—*The Trent*. There was plenty of bluster, and a certain number of troops were despatched to Canada, but shortly the Federal Government consented to return the emissaries and the crisis was over. It is said that the Queen did much towards securing this peaceful settlement, by insisting on conciliatory methods being used by Palmerston. If this be true, the world owes another debt to that admirable woman, for the person who averts war is more noble and more honourable than the greatest of conquerors and devastators.

'The drying-up one single tear has more  
Of honest fame, than shedding seas of gore.

'When Parliament met for the Session of 1862 we had just got calmed down after the *Trent* affair, but this horrible militarism, which has got absolute possession of us when

<sup>1</sup> (1802–1883): M.P. for Carlisle, 1861–1874.

I write (1901) was beginning to take hold of Parliament and People then.

‘Palmerston fanned the flame, and promoted a vast scheme of Fortification. I listened to the Debates on this matter, and came to the conclusion that a more useless and absurd scheme had never been brought forward. This probably made it popular! The strange thing was that Gladstone, when making speeches out of the House, could not conceal his dislike and contempt of the Fortification Policy, but still he remained in the Government. A joke at the time was that Palmerston had set his chimney on fire by burning Gladstone’s notes of resignation.

‘I have a shrewd suspicion that Disraeli, in his heart, saw the folly of the whole thing as clearly as Gladstone, and it was during this Session that he, one evening, used the words—“Bloated Armaments,” which for long were a kind of catch-word with those who hated this development of militarism.

‘Once or twice during the Session Cobden lost all patience with Palmerston for this policy, and his strong language now and then provoked equal violence from Palmerston. As a rule his answer was not to attempt to say that his policy was Liberal, but that it had the support of the country—which apparently it had. Indeed it seems to me that what may be called the political religion of *most* statesmen is the worship of the “Jumping Cat.” I remember a delicious epitaph on a French statesman—“He spent his life in coming to the rescue of the strongest.” Indeed, it is the same policy inculcated by Mr. Pickwick, who, on being asked by Mr. Tupman what he was to do at an election, told him to “do what the mob do”; and, on his friend asking what he was to do if there were two mobs, replied “Shout with the largest.”

‘In connexion with this horrible spirit of militarism and meddlesomeness with all nations, which I watched gradually growing up, I remember a Debate and Division which we



had, on a motion of Mr. White,<sup>1</sup> condemning any interference in China between the Government and the rebels. I find in my Journal: "On coming in from the Division (it was July 8, 1862) Cobden said to some of us, privately, that he believed this vote would some day be appealed to as a most important one." But, looking back now on all the years which have passed since then, I am inclined to think that nothing will ever cure the English people of their insane passion for interfering in other people's business.

'I have heard Sir John Lubbock (now Lord Avebury) tell a story illustrative of this national propensity. There was a farmer who was always bothering his landlord, when out hunting, with all kinds of questions. One day he said, as usual, "What news, my Lord?" to which, in hopes of getting rid of him, the answer was: "Oh! the Dutch have got into Holland," whereupon the farmer said: "By George, we'll soon have them out of that!"

'Nevertheless to the credit of this Parliament it must be said that we did abstain from interfering in the American Civil War, and I think this was very much due to Disraeli, who seemed to grasp the whole question more promptly and more correctly than did Gladstone. Still of course the fire-eaters and mischief-makers raised several dangerous Debates on the question of interference.

'While all this extravagant expenditure was going on, there were a few Radicals who chafed at it, and thought they might do something to check it. I remember a breakfast at the house of Mr. W. E. Forster<sup>2</sup> to try and arrange for a suitable Resolution. There were present: Mr. Stansfeld,<sup>3</sup> Sir Charles Doughty,<sup>4</sup> Mr. Baxter,<sup>5</sup> Mr. Childers,<sup>6</sup> Mr. Baines,<sup>7</sup> Mr. Dunlop,<sup>8</sup> Mr. E. A. Leatham,<sup>9</sup> Mr. Caird,<sup>10</sup> Mr. White, Mr.

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Brighton.

<sup>3</sup> M.P. for Halifax.

<sup>5</sup> M.P. for Montrose Boroughs.

<sup>7</sup> M.P. for Leeds.

<sup>9</sup> M.P. for Huddersfield.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for Bradford.

<sup>4</sup> M.P. for Banbury.

<sup>6</sup> M.P. for Pontefract.

<sup>8</sup> M.P. for Greenock.

<sup>10</sup> M.P. for Stirling Boroughs.

Seely,<sup>1</sup> and myself. We concocted a Resolution, which Stansfeld was to move, and I rather think we shrewdly suspected that we might get some Tory support and really make some impression in favour of retrenchment. But when the day came, Palmerston, by some adroit manœuvres and making the thing a question of Confidence, managed to make the whole affair ridiculous, and it ended pretty much in smoke.

‘Of Parliamentary incidents we had, as usual, a few. Rather strangely, we lost the Anti-Church Rate Bill by one—having had a “tie” on it the year before. One night, Maguire<sup>2</sup> having attacked Sir Robert Peel, the latter said that he did not heed such an attack “from such a man.” This occasioned angry discussion, which resulted in a solemn decision that you might say “such a quarter,” but not “such a man.” One is rather reminded of the man in the police court, who, being alluded to as “an individual,” said angrily, “I’d have you know, Sir, that I am no more an ‘individual’ than you are.”

‘Sir George Cornewall Lewis<sup>3</sup> used to bore me immensely with his speeches, which were balancing, hesitating, and inconclusive to my mind. Yet he was considered—and no doubt was—a very learned as well as a most excellent man. I see I compared his style of speech to that of “an astronomer in a dream”; an absurd phrase, as I do not know any astronomers and they probably would not speak if dreaming; but I reproduce it as showing the effect of Lewis’s oratory—on me at any rate.

‘In looking back on this Session, I am surprised to see how often the Government were beaten on semi-important questions. But they went on all the same. The Tories did not want to turn them out. Of course Palmerston was

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Lincoln.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for Dungarvan.

<sup>3</sup> The Right Hon. Sir George Cornewall Lewis (1806–1863), M.P. for Radnor Boroughs; Chancellor of the Exchequer 1855–1858; Home Secretary 1859–1861; Secretary for War 1861 to death.



really the best possible man for them, and the shrewdest of them knew this well enough. But the whole Parliamentary proceedings until his death were more or less of a demoralizing sham, at which Gladstone and a few Radicals chafed, but which seemed pleasant enough for the bulk of the House on both sides, who, belonging to the cultivated and well-to-do classes, are never, as a rule, very keen for any great political changes.

‘Palmerston, in those days, seemed to me to be a very fine representative of the weaknesses and the more or less harmless or harmful follies of the nation, just as Chamberlain is now a brilliant representative of their truculent propensities.

‘About this time I took an interest in a Farmers’ Club, which was established at Wigton, a small market-town in Cumberland. Its history was slightly interesting, and, as it was probably much the same as that of others, it may interest some readers who have had a hand in this sort of thing. We used to meet at intervals of a few weeks to read papers on agricultural matters. Eight or ten farmers used to attend, but very few of them would discuss the papers in the room, though probably on their way home, they would roundly express their opinion that the writers were fools—which they probably were. We struggled on for a year or so, if I remember right, and then, as nobody came any more to the discussions, we wound the thing up.

‘Something similar was the experience of a brother of mine, who was full of admirable energy devoted to the improvement and elevation of the workers on his farm. He decided to read Shakespeare to them in the evenings, but he told me that the first evening he commenced, on looking up, after five minutes reading, they were all asleep! There is a text which says “the way of transgressors is hard,” but I always think there must be some mistranslation and it should read, “the way of reformers is hard.”

‘About this time I used occasionally to go and hear Spurgeon

preach at his immense Tabernacle. No preacher was ever, I suppose, more popular than Spurgeon. With all his great gifts, his genius, his common-sense, and his courage, I cannot help thinking his magnificent voice and perfect elocution helped very much towards his popularity. It was very interesting to see how he swayed the enormous congregation who attended his ministry. His humour and wit are well known. One of the best stories which I know about him was that, when someone wrote to ask him whether a man who played the *cornet à piston* could be a Christian, he replied that "he didn't know, but he was sure the man who lived next door couldn't be!" He was a staunch Baptist, and I remember one day when he had been expounding Baptist doctrines in the pulpit for some time, he said: "I shall not proceed further with the argument now; anyone who wishes to understand the Baptist doctrine will find it all explained in a little book, which can be purchased for fourpence. It is called the New Testament."

'The Baptists are a denomination whom I have always heard highly spoken of. Still there is imperfection in everybody, even in Christians. In America, when the adults are baptized, it is the custom, I have been told, for the Minister to accompany them into any convenient river, while the onlookers line the bank. The Minister asks of the audience, about each convert, whether they know any reason against the baptism. On the Minister's, on one occasion, asking this question of the crowd, regarding an old man whom he was about to baptize, a Yankee, leaning on his rifle on the bank, replied: "Minister, I've known that old man for fifty years—a regular tough old sinner he is. If you want to get the sin washed out of him, you'll have to anchor him out in deep water and leave him there over night!"'

Lawson's reference to Gladstone in connexion with the Civil War in America seems to be justified by what occurred

in the recess of 1862. The Government, of which Gladstone was a leading Member, had issued a Proclamation of Neutrality, warning all subjects of the Queen against helping either of the belligerents. This was virtually a recognition of the South as a separate Power, and the resentment of the North was naturally aroused. England had rushed to extend equality of treatment to a friendly State and to its rebellious subjects. Speaking at Newcastle on the 7th of October, Gladstone used words which deepened this unfortunate impression. 'We may have our own opinions about slavery; we may be for or against the South; but there is no doubt, I think, about this—Jefferson Davis and the other leaders of the South have made an army; they are making, it appears, a navy, and they have made what is more than either—they have made a nation. We may anticipate with certainty the success of the Southern States, so far as regards effecting their separation from the North. I, for my own part, cannot but believe that that event is as certain as any event yet future and contingent can be.'

Gladstone certainly did not overstate the case against himself when he said five years afterwards—'I must confess that I was wrong; and that I took too much upon myself in expressing such an opinion.'

## CHAPTER III

## CALM BEFORE STORM

A CALM, which could scarcely be described as holy, but which was certainly profound, had settled down on English politics. While Europe and America were agitated by wars and rumours of wars, England was at peace. The revenue advanced, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, 'by leaps and bounds.' Political agitation had died away for lack of workable material. Much of this tranquillity was due to Palmerston. That remarkable man, now on the verge of eighty, had been established by the General Election of 1859 in a position of undisputed supremacy. His policy abroad had been active and turbulent enough : at home it was easy-going to the point of lethargy. His strength was to sit still. When the Radical butcher at Tiverton asked him why he and his colleagues did not bring in another Reform Bill, he airily replied : 'Because we are not geese' ; and this was all the satisfaction that sincere reformers, and Liberals who were in earnest about their beliefs, could obtain from their venerable leader. No wonder that under these circumstances the relations between Palmerston and his supporters became a little strained ; or that thoughtful men, regarding the enormous interests which hung upon the single thread of a life already far prolonged, began to speculate on the forces which his death would let loose, and to enquire who was to direct them. The Parliament of 1859-1865 is interesting, not for any legislation which it accomplished, but because it afforded the first indications of tremendous changes which were soon to come. Palmerston himself is reported



to have said, 'Gladstone will soon have it all his own way ; and, whenever he gets my place, we shall have strange doings.' Lord Shaftesbury thus reflected on the situation. 'This is considered a calm. But it is in reality no such thing. It is simply the peg driven through the island of Delos ; unloose the peg, and all will be adrift. Palmerston is that peg. Let him be driven out by defeat, by sickness, or by retirement, and all will be confusion. Gladstone and the Manchester party will ensure that issue.'

We now return to Lawson's narrative of this anxious time, so heavily charged with the fears of the timorous and the hopes of the sanguine.

'The Parliamentary Session of 1863 was very like that of 1862, "only more so."

'Almost the only exciting matter was the American Secession War, and the fire-eating rank and file used to get up Debates as to recognizing the Confederates, but the leaders on both sides were not so insane as to encourage anything of the kind.

'There was also a good deal of purposeless, fruitless eloquence about Poland, but nothing came of it. Then the experts were a good deal exercised in their minds about the Schleswig-Holstein question, but nothing came of that. It was said that there was only one man in Europe who understood the Schleswig-Holstein question, and that he had gone mad.

'As to domestic reforms, everything of that nature was either adjourned or postponed. But I remember in one Debate, when Reform was mentioned, there was slight sneering laughter somewhere, and I heard Cobden, whom I was sitting near, say : "I have heard the same men laugh in the same way when the Free Trade question was mentioned, and the Reform question will pay quite as good interest for keeping." And so it did. And so will all reforms. They are sure to come if—to quote Cobden again—"they are good

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in themselves, they have persevering advocates, and they have the hostility of the *Times* newspaper."

'Liquor, as usual, came up more or less in this Session, and I remember making a speech in favour of Mr. Somes'<sup>1</sup> Sunday Closing Bill. When Sir George Grey, the Home Secretary, spoke against it, he was good enough to say that I had made the best speech for the Bill, but that my argument was equally good for total prohibition. This pleased me considerably, as that was just where I wished my argument to tend.

'I think the keeping of Public Houses open on Sunday is about the most ghastly-comical thing in all our system of anomalies and absurdities. The day is divided between the service of the Almighty and the worship of Bacchus—the latter being far the most popular and patronized.

'The next Session, 1864, was perhaps more lively than the previous one. The great American Civil War occupied the attention of the world, and so, of course, of the House of Commons, which nothing escapes. There was talk about the "Rams" which were built in England and supplied to the Confederates, and this talk gave opportunities for the sympathizers with the Confederates to express their sympathies and indirectly to gird at Freedom everywhere. But still we kept clear of recognition of the Seceding States.

'But the contest between Germany and Denmark over the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein was a still better peg on which to hang meddlesome speeches, and towards the end of the Session Disraeli got up a first-rate Party fight on a Resolution condemning the Government for not having interfered somehow or other in this affair.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Hull.

<sup>2</sup> July 4, 1864: 'While the course pursued by Her Majesty's Government has failed to maintain their avowed policy of upholding the integrity and independence of Denmark, it has lowered the just influence of this country in the capitals of Europe, and thereby diminished the securities for peace.'

‘There is always a large Party in this country who wish to interfere in everything. They remind me of a dog which, when it sees two other dogs fighting, thinks it must rush in.

‘However, Disraeli and his interference were beaten by a majority of eighteen, and so old Palmerston was left supreme till the end of his life. But Gladstone’s influence was gradually growing with the Liberal Party. One day Mr. Baines<sup>1</sup> moved the Second Reading of his Bill for reducing the Borough Franchise, and in the ensuing Debate, Gladstone made a speech, in which he said that every man was entitled to a vote, unless disqualified on moral grounds—or words to that effect. The sentence was tremendously cheered by the Liberals, and from that day he may be said to have become virtually the Leader of the Liberal Party; and this notwithstanding that a few weeks later he published his speech with a preface which made his meaning not quite clear. But this was rather his habit, and we knew pretty well what he really meant, viz.: that when he had the chance, he would produce a real Reform Bill.

‘This Session was one which was rather memorable to me as the one in which I first introduced what was called the “Permissive Bill.” The general law of the land was then, as it is now, that the sale of strong drink was prohibited, as being dangerous to the community, but that exceptions to this rule were allowed, when the magistrates thought that they might be made. It was laid down by Sir Roundell Palmer (afterwards Lord Selborne), in answer to a question in the House of Commons, that, before the magistrates granted these exceptional privileges or Licenses, they were to be satisfied on three points:—first: whether the man to be licensed was a good character; second: whether his house was suitable for drinking purposes; and third: what were the requirements of the neighbourhood. My Bill simply provided the machinery by which a neighbourhood might inform the magistrates—or any Licensing authority—that their require-

<sup>1</sup> Sir Edward Baines (1800–1890), M.P. for Leeds, 1859–1874.

ment was—No drink-shops in that neighbourhood—when that really was their wish. I provided that the statement of desire should be made by a very large majority, so that there might be no mistake.

‘This Bill, one would have thought, was as simple as it was just, but in those days it found little favour. The Public House was looked upon as about as sacred as the Church, and the idea of doing anything which might eliminate it from our national and social life was looked upon with horror. The very men who, from their position and from the accident of property, were able to prevent drink-licenses being obtained near their own dwelling-places could not think of allowing their poorer neighbours to have the same chance of protecting themselves.

‘A Bill must have at least the names of two Members printed on its back, before it is allowed to be printed and brought into the House. At one moment I hardly thought that I should get my second man, but I did; and it happened in this wise:—Mr. Bazley was at that time an honest, upright, and respected Member of the House, sitting for Manchester.<sup>1</sup> When the Bill was in contemplation some of its friends and promoters came to see him—they said, “Mr. Bazley, do you not own a small village, where you will not allow any drink shops to be established?” He said “Yes.” They said, “Has it done good?” “Certainly,” he said, “it has improved the village.” “And,” they said, “will you not then give us working men the same chance of improving our homes as you have of improving your village?” “I will,” he said, and he put his name on the back of my Bill. I never forgot it, and I should think that he was never sorry for it.

‘When the day came for the Second Reading, I made my speech with trepidation, but with confidence in the goodness of my cause. The day before, seeing Cobden in the Lobby, I asked him how he was going to vote, and he said: “Well,

<sup>1</sup> Sir Thomas Bazley (1797–1885), M.P. for Manchester, 1858–1880.



my impression is that I shall vote with you." But he did not vote, for some reason or other, and alas! before there was another opportunity, he was gone. But Bright, much to my regret, made a speech disparaging the Bill; though, as he talked of strong liquors as "pernicious articles," his argument against the effort to diminish their sale did not impress me much. The Division on Second Reading of the Bill was—ayes 35, noes 292.

'Well, the people have not yet got this simple power of protecting themselves from the Liquor-Traffic at the time I write, but I have lived to hear an expert on the Drink Question say "Local Veto" (as it is now called) "is the living issue on the Liquor-question in the English-speaking countries of the world," so we know what the end will be, though we cannot tell the time or the season.

'It was rather curious that in the same Session in which I introduced this Permissive Liquor Bill Mr. Bass, the great brewer,<sup>1</sup> should also have introduced and carried a Permissive Street Music Bill. Mr. Bass and I were very good friends, despite of our discordant views on liquor. He once said to me good-humouredly: "I'll settle a pint of beer a day on you for life, if you'll give up the Permissive Bill." To which I replied that "I couldn't do it under a barrel."

'But over this Street Music Bill, we used to have in the House long and exciting fights. The principle of the Bill was to "permit" a householder to order off the barrel-organ man or other musician if he disliked his attentions. I remember one night we had a great struggle on Punch and Judy; the point being whether Punch was as objectionable as the barrel-organ man. I voted for the protection and exception of Punch, thinking him one of the most interesting remaining institutions of the country, but he was beaten amid considerable excitement and indignation. Yet how great was the absurdity of our making all these arrangements

<sup>1</sup> M. T. Bass (1799-1884), M.P. for Derby, 1848-1883.



for the protection of the householders from barrel-organ men, hurdy-gurdies, monkeys, and Punch-and-Judys, and yet not allowing them to keep off beer-shops and Public Houses from their neighbourhood.

‘On April 11, 1864, Garibaldi made his public entrance into London. I drove in the procession following him for miles through the streets crowded with enthusiastic citizens. A wondrous and a pleasing sight. But why do these crowds come out on these occasions? One thought that they hailed Garibaldi as the brave and unselfish hero, who had brought independence to Italy—yet a few weeks before the time when I write these lines, the citizens of the same city came out in their thousands and their hundreds of thousands to acclaim Lord Roberts on his return from South Africa, where he had been engaged in trying to deprive of their independence the Boers, who had as much right to it as the Italians or the English themselves. Mankind are indeed incomprehensible, especially the English.

‘But the enthusiasm for Garibaldi at that time, whatever its motive, was great and genuine. There was an intention to get him to visit the great towns in the North, where he would have had an equally enthusiastic welcome, but somehow or other, in a way which will probably never be known, he was dissuaded from the journey, and prevailed upon to leave England within a short time. The *supposed* reason of all this was that the Government feared there would be a too great exhibition of Liberal and perhaps republican feeling in the North, and so desired to get him out of the country—and as promptly as it could be managed. I could not understand then, and I cannot understand now, why there should have been this fear in high places; nor do I know whether it really existed. But of one thing I am convinced, viz., that there was a plan in high places—an intrigue, if you like so to call it—to get Garibaldi out of the country quickly.

‘That staunch and honest Radical, Mr. Peter Taylor,<sup>1</sup> who was a great friend of Garibaldi and Mazzini, got at some of the facts of the intrigue, and he told me that some pamphlets were printed about it, but those “in the know” thought they would so damage certain persons that they burned them all. However all that may be, we had some rather curious doings in connexion with this business. I remember a deputation of Radicals, of whom I was one, having heard of the intrigue, going off to Gladstone’s house in Carlton House Terrace, and having an interview with him in the middle of a reception, which he was holding, but, of course, getting nothing out of him! and then going on to the house of Mr. Seely,<sup>2</sup> the Member for Lincoln, who was entertaining Garibaldi, in order to see the latter himself. This we did, about one o’clock in the morning, and asked him whether he would go to the North. The General said: “Ah! I shall like to go. I will give you an answer in the morning.” We said, “At what time?” Turning to Seely, he said: “Are we *soiréed* to-morrow?” a phrase which so well described the way in which he was being “run” that I never forgot it. However, the next day he told us he could not go north, and after some entertainments and *soirées*, left our shores, without any of the great northern demonstrations for which we had hoped. The incident was altogether rather a curious one, and as I have said, nothing more is ever likely to be known about it. “The Man in the Street,” however, got an inkling of what had been done, and I remember hearing a ballad-singer bawling a song about it, bringing in at the end of every verse:

‘The foreign powers have interfered—  
 Jealous indeed they all be:  
 He can’t remain no longer here—  
 Farewell, brave Geery Bawldi!

<sup>1</sup> P. A. Taylor (1819–1891), M.P. for Leicester, 1862–1884.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Seely (1803–1884), M.P. for Lincoln, 1861–1883.

‘In connexion with Italian politics we had in the House the attack on Mr. Stansfeld,<sup>1</sup> a member of the Ministry, for having had letters sent to his house for Mazzini, of whom he was a great friend. The Opposition made a tremendous fuss over this. Palmerston, whose great merit was that he always stuck to his men, did not wish him to resign ; but Stansfeld did so ; not wishing to embarrass the Government. There were some exciting scenes over this business, which interested me, as Stansfeld was one of my principal friends soon after first coming into the House.

‘I see in my Journal that I was again impressed by Lord Robert Cecil’s continual impertinence, as I called it. I do not believe, however, that these political personalities arise really from bad feeling. Men want to “get on,” to get power, really, believing that they can do good, when they become powerful. They cannot “get on” much without attracting the attention of the public, and the public likes to have all evil and all good focussed on one individual. So to do this in a brilliant and attractive way pays well. When the young minister asked the old one as to what should be his style of preaching, the latter said: “Keep pitching into the devil. He’s no popular with anyone.”

‘At the time when Lord Randolph Churchill was indulging in his most violent political personalities, a Tory friend of mine, talking about him to a man in an omnibus, rather regretted his violence ; to which the man replied “Oh ! Sir, the people likes it.” Lord Randolph knew this. From what little I know of him, I do not suppose he had ill will to anyone, but he made personal attacks, because he knew “the people liked it.”

‘I see mention made in my Journal of some discussion in the House about the hanging of five men all together in

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. Sir James Stansfeld (1820–1898), M.P. for Halifax 1859–1895,

London.<sup>1</sup> This apparently excited some horror, but a battle in which 500 or 5,000 persons may be slain excites no horror, only admiration and satisfaction.

‘Why again is the hangman looked down upon? I came casually on an old newspaper cutting containing a clergyman’s account of Calcraft, then the leading executioner of the day. He writes: “I happen to know the man, as the minister of the Church in which he worships, and a more worthy creature does not exist. He is a good and tender-hearted man, an habitual attendant at a Church of England place of worship, where his white head and venerable appearance are pleasingly conspicuous, though his identity is not generally known among the congregation.” He appears, from the description, to have been a kind of mediæval saint, yet that last sentence about his identity not being generally known points to the distaste which is felt towards the hangman. But again I wonder why, when Lord Kitchener comes back from slaughtering 20,000 Dervishes, much in the same way as rabbits are slaughtered at a battue, and all sorts and conditions of men, high and low, rich and poor, Liberal and Conservative, hasten to give him banquets and almost to worship him, is the hangman to be disparaged? He has taken life in the due course of Law, after the whole case has been most carefully and solemnly considered, and the culprit is presumably, in the eyes of men, unfit to live. But in a battle the men who are slain may probably be quite as respectable as the men who slay them. Why, then, is he who perpetrates the battle-slaughter to be extolled, and he who carries out the gallows-slaughter to be slighted and tabooed? I have never been able to answer this question satisfactorily to myself, but probably many of my readers can answer it quite satisfactorily—to themselves.

‘I do not seem to have a very vivid recollection of the

<sup>1</sup> Five pirates, convicted of murder on board *The Flowery Land*, were executed at Newgate, February 22, 1864.



proceedings of the Session of 1865, but my impression now is that things went on pretty much in the same way as they had done in the preceding Sessions of this Parliament. The American Civil War being concluded just before the murder of Lincoln, we got through that trouble without any armed interference, which was a great blessing.

‘Reform was talked about in the usual half-hearted way, and nothing done regarding it.

‘I find noted in my Journal, that one day Mr. Vincent Scully,<sup>1</sup> in the course of a Game-Law Debate, informed us that he once “knew an otter which used to kill sheep.” I have often heard Irish Members make remarkable statements, but I think that this one was the most remarkable.

‘On April 2, 1865, Cobden died. I fully shared the reverence and regard with which he inspired all those who knew him, but his character and public conduct have been so often and so well portrayed by those well fitted to do so that I can say nothing new about him, except that it appears to me that every succeeding year which goes over our heads is a fresh testimony to the soundness of his Free Trade Gospel. People seldom think now of the tremendous material revolution which Cobden and Bright accomplished by peaceful agitation; an agitation which took the people of the country out of pawn to the landlords and made this country the richest in the world. When one remembers how they were hated, persecuted, and reviled for doing this, and how they lived to overcome it all and to obtain recognition of the right and the true, the lines in Gray’s incomparable Elegy seem to fit them exactly—for they lived

The applause of listening Senates to command,  
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,  
To scatter plenty o’er a smiling land,  
And read their history in a nation’s eyes.

‘Never was a more touching scene than that in the House

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Co. Cork.

on the afternoon of the day after Cobden's death. Palmerston rose and paid a generous and suitable tribute to the departed statesman. Disraeli followed, and very beautifully said that he was one of the men who, though dead, were with us still, independent of the vicissitudes and changes of Parliaments, or words to that effect. Then Bright rose, and, though almost overcome by his emotion, said a few words about his departed friend, thanking Palmerston and Disraeli for what they had uttered. I was sitting next him and can almost think I hear his closing words as he sat down, saying: "I never knew how much I loved him, until I found that I had lost him." Were not such an appreciation and such a requiem worth all the honours, distinctions, and titles which office and what is called statesmanship can confer?

'We buried Mr. Cobden on April 7 at his home in Lavington in Surrey, and there, I think, rests—if the greatness of public men is to be measured by their goodness—the greatest English citizen of the Nineteenth Century.

'Towards the end of summer all hearts were turned towards the coming General Election, for Parliament (elected in 1859) had practically run out its tether, and accordingly was dissolved early in July 1865.

'At Carlisle Mr. Potter and I were the two Liberal Candidates. Mr. Hodgson was the Tory Candidate. Under ordinary circumstances I should have been a stronger candidate than Mr. Potter, through my local connexion with the County, but I had committed the unpardonable sin of bringing in the Permissive Bill, and thus daring to fly in the face of what Lord Randolph Churchill called, many years afterwards, this "devilish and destructive Liquor-Traffic." Many of my Liberal supporters also, I doubt not, thought it very unwise to raise such a thorny subject in Parliament, but there were not a great many who deserted on that score. Still, a very few gone over would make all the difference, and the end of the contest saw Mr. Hodgson, the Tory, at the head of the

Poll, while Mr. Potter came second, and I was fifteen votes below Mr. Potter—left out in the cold. This was because I had wished to provide for the people managing their own affairs and being allowed to protect themselves from Liquor-shops, instead of leaving that protective power exclusively in the hands of the magistrates. Drink was king then, as he is now, and he had any number of electoral slaves then, as he has now. The Liquor "Ring" rejoiced greatly over this triumph, and the *Times* newspaper had an article expressing its pleasure at my defeat, and prophesying that no place was likely ever to return me to the House again. It is strange how people *will* indulge in prophecy, which a wise writer<sup>1</sup> has described as "the most gratuitous of all forms of error."

'For the next three years I was out of Parliament. I have noticed that when you are defeated it is the proper thing to say—"Personally, I do not regret it." This, I believe, to be cant. Why does a man stand if he does not want to get in? At any rate, I was sorry to be beaten, and hoped to get in again somewhere or other, sometime or another. Meanwhile, I joined the noble army of agitators who advocate various reforms out of doors.

'It was an exciting time, for it was then that the Tories under Disraeli's leadership turned right round, and, taking what Lord Derby called "a leap in the dark," gave us Household Suffrage in the Boroughs. I missed all the curious and exciting intrigues and manœuvres which took place in the House during these three years—the doings of the "Adulamites,"<sup>2</sup> of the "Tea-room Party,"<sup>3</sup> of dissentient Liberals and disgusted Tories. Speaking roughly, the Tories produced a Bill and Mr. Gladstone and the Liberals fashioned it to their liking. When the Bill was ultimately passed, the Duke of Buccleuch said there was nothing left of the original, except the first word—"Whereas."

<sup>1</sup> George Eliot.

<sup>2</sup> In 1866.

<sup>3</sup> In 1867.



'Outside we had famous meetings and demonstrations. Looking back on it all, it does seem incomprehensible how the people, who then seemed so keen to be enfranchised, should, when they got their votes, have used them to so little purpose. The Fighting interest, the Liquor interest, the Aristocratic interest, the Ecclesiastical interest, could none of them have been safer in the hands of a restricted electorate than they have been in the hands of the enfranchised masses. I used to laugh at Disraeli and say that he had invented the Conservative Working-man, but he invented him to some purpose—"the residuum" John Bright used to call the class—though why a working man should be a Conservative I could never understand.

'I remember at the trial of an Election Petition at Taunton one of the witnesses appeared to be very dense, and at last the counsel examining asked him: "Do you know anything about politics?" "No," he said, "but I was always a Conservative."

'Before all the Reform doings which I have mentioned, Lord Palmerston was dead, and these Reform struggles were carried on with Lord Russell, to begin with, as Liberal Prime Minister, though they were finished, as I have said, under Tory auspices.<sup>1</sup>

'It is difficult to sum up Lord Palmerston's political character. I have got an impression (probably a perfectly wrong one) that he was a kind of second edition of Lord Melbourne. He was supposed, by some, to have no convictions—being thus unlike the tramp to whom the kind-hearted lady said: "I see, my man, you have had many trials"—to which he replied "Yes, and the worst of it is there were so many convictions!"

'My general notion of him is, that he was an excellent

<sup>1</sup> Lord Palmerston died October 18, 1865. He was succeeded by Lord Russell, with Mr. Gladstone as Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons.



political stage-manager—able to keep the people behind the curtain in good order, and the people in front in good humour. In short he was an admirable type of the “For he’s a jolly good fellow” sort of politician. However, with his departure the whole scene changed, and Gladstone, bringing the element of earnestness into politics, soon worked a transformation which had much to do with the exciting Reform agitation I have mentioned.

‘During the summer of 1867 my father died. I do not think that in reminiscences of this kind one is able to say much appropriately about one’s own relations, unless they were somewhat prominently connected with public affairs. So I will only say about my father that his absolute integrity and honesty were the same in public as in private affairs. He was keen for Free Trade from the first, and I have heard him say that his fellow-landowners in the county, with whom he was on intimate terms, used to avoid him in the streets of Carlisle, rather than be seen talking to a revolutionary character who did not wish the people to be starved to enrich the landlords.

‘I now became a Baronet. A Baronet I have heard described as one “who is not a nobleman but has ceased to be a gentleman.” In connexion with hereditary titles, it seems to me that to introduce fresh Christian names into families is a good thing. History is confused when there is an unceasing succession of Sir John this, or Sir William that, and the doings of fathers and sons get mixed up in an uncomfortable and perplexing way. For instance, there have been three Sir Robert Peels in my time—all very different kinds of men. If these Christian names had been different, explanations by those writing of them would be unnecessary. But the titles themselves the owners ardently love. Sheridan said that whenever he met a man at the club whose face he remembered, but whose name he had forgotten—he always called him “Sir John,” which pleased him. Then, if he still

could not make him out, he would say he "hoped his amiable family were well," and if that failed, he would try once more by "trusting he had got rid of his old complaint" !

'While out of Parliament, I sometimes had an excellent old gentleman down to Cumberland, whose profession it was to lay out parks and pleasure-grounds and advise thereon. I think his advice was good on the whole, but I heard rather a suggestive story about him. He went to a country house to advise, and on the day of his arrival, looking from the door, he pointed to a wood on the top of a hill, and said : " Nothing can be done till we cut that down." He was taken ill that evening and laid up for a week. When he came down again, the wood had been cut down, and, not knowing this, he looked to the hill and said : " Nothing can be done till we plant that."

'This reminds me of the School Inspectors who come down and recommend certain alterations, and, when the alteration is over, make exactly contradictory recommendations ; desiring something which has been done to be undone.

'During the three years that I was out of Parliament, I assisted in the outside attack on the Liquor-Traffic—that attack being conducted principally under the auspices of the United Kingdom Alliance—an Association which was formed with the object of overthrowing the legalized Liquor-Traffic. It occurs to me that I may here suitably enlarge somewhat on my own connexion with this movement.

'I am not professing to give a large and comprehensive view of the whole question, but in a book of Memoirs the object, I suppose, is to illustrate, as far as it can be done, the position of a public question by the relation to that question of the individual concerned in the Memoirs.

'When Horace Greeley was asked by a young man what course he should take in life, he replied : " Young man, take up some unpopular question." I fancy the intelligent reader will say at once, " Ah ! That is what you did ! " But that is not so. I did not take up the question—the question took

me up. Why it doesn't take up everybody who has a brain and a heart I never knew, I do not know now, and I never shall know. Everybody (now) admits that drinking is the master-curse of the day. We have been told until we are sick that education will cure it ; that religious teaching will cure it ; that good homes will cure it ; that counter-attractions will cure it ; and the years have gone by with all these influences at work, and the scandal, the shame, and the horror of the thing still remain—I will not say unmitigated, but certainly in full blast—a national crime and a national disgrace of the first magnitude.

‘It seemed to me, in the years of which I write, that all the good influences which I have mentioned would be substantially neutralized so long as the Drink—which is the cause of drunkenness—was legally dispensed and distributed among the people.

‘Old James Teare, one of the early Temperance pioneers, once met, I thought, forcibly—if roughly—the argument about trusting to the Grace of God to bring about national sobriety. He said: “If I drink a pint of whiskey, the Grace of God won't keep me sober”!

‘It has always been a great mystery to me how the people who are called “professing Christians” can sustain and support our Liquor-Laws, which are nothing more nor less than a gigantic network of temptation. Lord Cairns very truly described Public Houses as “traps and pitfalls for the working men.” Yet multitudes of these professing Christians would go, and go now every Sunday to church and pray five times in the Service not to be led into temptation. Then on the week-days they either sell drink themselves in Lord Cairns' traps, or license these places, or support Members of Parliament who keep up this wholesale system of temptation.

‘So when we started the attack on the Liquor-Traffic, we had no very enthusiastic support from the religious people. The upper classes, as they are called, knew, as usual, little



or nothing about the necessities of those called the "lower classes." The professional politicians felt that the vote of the publican was indispensable to them. The philosophers constructed some theory about Liberty, when the whole question was really one of "License." The newspaper-editors were, of course, obliged to support the wealthy Trade—"where their treasure is, there their heart is also"; while the "man in the street" was persuaded that the greatest crime which could be committed was "to rob a poor man of his beer"! Here was a nice state of things in which to start an agitation! It may be said that the Free Trade agitation commenced under as great difficulties, but that is not so. Connected with that agitation were many rich and far-seeing merchants who, out of their abundance, provided princely sums for the agitation in which they believed, and which they also knew would, when consummated, bring them in, personally, an exceeding rich reward in revived and augmented trade. But it was little money indeed that we had with which to fight the richest monopoly in the world. "Not many great, not many mighty, not many noble" were on our side. Mr. Bass, the great brewer, said very truly that for every 1*l.* we could put down, the Trade could put down 100. He might without exaggeration have said 1,000.

' It may well be thought that it was a wild thing for me to take an active part against such an institution as the Liquor-Traffic, under such circumstances, and I certainly would not have taken the part which I did if anyone else would have undertaken it. But having no axe to grind, and nothing in the world to gain by politics, it seemed to me the right thing to support any policy which would provide the greatest good for the greatest number. For doing this I do not suppose there is any term of opprobrium to be found in the Dictionary which has not been applied to me some time or other by "the organs of public opinion," as we call the newspapers, but which are generally the organs of "publican"



opinion—or, as some profane jester once called them, the “Barrel Organs.”

‘ Nevertheless, in spite of all, we used to hold tremendous and successful meetings, where “the common people heard us gladly.” At first, the Trade used occasionally to break up our meetings amid scenes somewhat amusing, and exceedingly disorderly. I remember going to a meeting at Sandwich where a half-drunken and disorderly contingent attended in force, and by yells, catcalls, songs, and the blowing of horns, prevented our getting a hearing. At length we managed to get one of the ringleaders on to the platform, and asked him to make a speech instead of yelling. So he stood up as steadily as he could. Then he turned to a most respectable-looking brewer, who was sitting demurely in a side-gallery (but had *probably* organized the raid of the ruffians) and said: “I want to know what is to become of this gentleman?” I think this was about the best speech which I ever heard in favour of prohibition of the Liquor-Trade. The speaker saw so clearly that it was kept up entirely for the advantages of the Trader, regardless of the result to the Consumer. All the talk about “vested rights,” another word, generally, for “vested wrongs”—compensation etc., is based on an attempt to discover “what is to become of this gentleman?”

‘ The United Kingdom Alliance condemned the proceedings of “this gentleman”—the Liquor-Dealer—in toto. It held that it was unjust and impolitic for a Government to license him to deal in the Liquors which cause the greatest portion of the crime and misery of the nation.

‘ Mr. Charles Buxton <sup>1</sup>—himself a Brewer—wrote an article in which he said that through drink there were half a million homes in the United Kingdom where happiness never came. Now, from enquiry, it came out that in many parts of the country there were districts where “this gentleman,” *i.e.* the liquor-dealer, was not permitted to carry on his business—

<sup>1</sup> (1822–1871): M.P. for East Surrey.

places where, through the accident of property, large landed proprietors were able to say, and to say effectively, "There shall be no Licensed Liquor-shops here." I believe that one of the public-spirited and intelligent landlords who have taken that course is His Majesty King Edward VII, who keeps his Sandringham estate free from Public Houses, making it what is called in South Africa, when a district is under prohibition of the Liquor-Traffic, "an uncontaminated zone." The advantages which have arisen in districts which have been thus treated are beyond all dispute. When Liquor is kept away, the evils arising from liquor do not exist.

'This, then, was the basis, so far as I was concerned, of the plan of campaign against the Liquor-Traffic. Give the people in their several localities power to protect themselves from the Liquor-Traffic, in the same way in which the landowners already are often able to do it for them. This is permissive legislation in the matter, and I have heard Mr. Disraeli say that "Permissive Legislation is characteristic of a free nation."

'As I have already explained, "the Trade" and all those influenced by and subservient to the Trade—whose name is legion—saw, with unerring instinct, that, if the people were entrusted with this power of self-protection and chose to exercise it, "the hope of their gains was gone."

'This policy was at first popularly known as the "Permissive Bill" from the Bill which I introduced. As time went on, it was called "Local Option," and my impression is that the first time I saw that phrase was in a letter written by Mr. Gladstone. In later years it got commonly called "Local Veto," and by that name it is generally spoken of at the time I write. But whatever the name, the policy was the same all along, viz. no forcing of Liquor-shops into unwilling areas. This was the text on which I have preached hundreds of sermons with what may truly be said to have been a "damnable iteration." To that text I still pin my faith, and I have

here somewhat elaborated the matter, so that possibly incidents, which may have to be related as these Memoirs advance, may be seen in a clearer light.'

It is now time to return from this personal digression to the course of general politics.

We have seen that the General Election of 1865 resulted in a majority for Palmerston. This is really a more accurate phrase than a majority for Liberalism. It was only the restraining and controlling influence of the Prime Minister that kept the discordant elements of the Liberal Party in even the outward semblance of harmony. As soon as that influence was withdrawn, and Lord Russell succeeded to the Premiership, with Gladstone as his lieutenant in the House of Commons, murmurs of disaffection began to make themselves heard; and when, at the opening of the Session of 1866, it was announced that a Reform Bill was to be immediately introduced, the murmurs swelled into a roar. Men who had just emerged from the turmoil and expense of a General Election had no mind to support a measure which, if carried, would involve another appeal to the Electorate at an early date. Disaffected Liberals made common cause with the Conservatives who had so lately been their opponents; and by their combined efforts the Reform Bill was defeated on an amendment moved by Lord Dunkellin<sup>1</sup> on the 18th of June. It was the anniversary of Waterloo, and the coincidence was thus happily turned to account by Mr., afterwards Sir, George Trevelyan, who had first entered Parliament at the General Election of 1865.<sup>2</sup>

Just one-and-fifty years had gone since on the Belgian plain,  
Amid the scorched and trampled rye, Napoleon turned his rein;  
And once again in panic fled a gallant host and proud,  
And once again a chief of might 'neath Fortune's malice bowed.

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Co. Galway.

<sup>2</sup> For Tynemouth.

So vast and serried an array, so brave and fair to view,  
Ne'er mustered yet around the flag of mingled Buff and Blue—  
So potent in the show of strength, in daring zeal so bold—  
Since Grey went forth in 'Thirty-two to storm corruption's hold.  
But in the pageant all is bright, and, till the shock we feel,  
We learn not what is burnished tin, and what is tempered steel.  
When comes the push of charging ranks, when spear and buckler  
clash,

Then snaps the shaft of treacherous fir, then holds the trusty ash.  
And well the fatal truth we knew when sounds of lawless fight  
In baleful concert down the line came pealing from our right,  
Which, in the hour of sorest need, upon our centre fell,  
Where march the good old houses still that love the people well.  
As to and fro our battle swayed in terror, doubt, and shame,  
Like wolves among the trembling flock the Tory vanguard came,  
And scattered us as startled girls to tree and archway go,  
Whene'er the pattering hailstorm sweeps along the crowded Row.  
A moment yet with shivered blade, torn scarf, and pennon reft,  
Imperial Gladstone turned to bay amidst our farthest left,  
Where, shoulder tight to shoulder set, fought on in sullen pride  
The veterans staunch who drink the streams of Tyne, and Wear,  
and Clyde;

Who've borne the toil, and heat, and blows of many a hopeless  
fray;

Who serve uncheered by rank and fame, unbought by place or pay.  
At length, deserted and outmatched, by fruitless efforts spent,  
From that disastrous field of strife our steps we homeward bent,  
Ere long to ride in triumph back, escorted near and far  
By eager millions surging on behind our hero's car;  
While Blue and Yellow streamers deck each Tory convert's brow,  
And both the Carltons swell the shout: 'We're all Reformers now!'

The prophet had not long to wait for the fulfilment of his prophecy. The Government immediately resigned; and Lord Derby, in announcing his acceptance of office, said that he reserved to himself entire liberty to deal with the question of Parliamentary Reform whenever suitable occasion should arise. In the Session of 1867 he made good his words, and,



aided by the almost superhuman skill and audacity of his henchman Disraeli, established Household Suffrage as the basis of representation in Boroughs. He retired from office in February 1868, and Disraeli became Prime Minister. Lord Chelmsford, who found himself abruptly dismissed from the Chancellorship, sought consolation in a gibe. 'The last Government was the Derby: this is the Hoax.' And the saying very fairly represented the facts of the situation. The new Prime Minister, though in office, was not in power. He was nominally the Leader of a House in which his political opponents had a large majority. The settlement of the controversy about Reform had healed the schism in the Liberal Party; and they could now defeat the Government whenever they chose to mass their forces. Early in the Session, Gladstone brought in a Bill abolishing Compulsory Church Rates, and this passed into law. In March, he said in the course of a debate on Ireland, that the time had come when 'the Irish Church, as a State-Church, must cease to exist.' So the great secret was out. The Irish Church was to be disestablished. Gladstone moved a series of Resolutions affirming that principle, and, having carried the first and cardinal Resolution by sixty-five against the Government, immediately brought in a Bill to prevent any fresh appointments in the Irish Church. The Bill was carried in the Commons, but thrown out by the Lords. Parliament was prorogued at the end of July, and, as the General Election had been fixed for the ensuing November, the political campaign in the constituencies was at once begun. A single and simple issue was placed before the electors—was the Irish Church to be, or not to be, disestablished?

'The new Household Suffrage,' writes Lawson, 'had about trebled the number of voters at Carlisle. I was asked to stand again and did so, along with Mr. Potter, and we were both returned after a very close contest. This General Election

turned principally on the Disestablishment of the Irish Church, which Gladstone had made clear should be the first business of a Liberal Government, if returned to power. But the English Established Church was still considered, by a great many of the old-fashioned Liberals, as sacred as ever. One night, speaking at Carlisle, during the Election, I said I had "no fear" that Irish Disestablishment would lead to English Disestablishment, whereat the "respectables" cheered, and I then added—no "fear" of it, but a "certainty"! I feel that certainty still, but it is lucky I did not name the time. Had I done so, I might have been in the difficulty which was experienced by a sanguine politician who declared in his speech that "there was a good time coming"; on which one of his audience called out: "Could you oblige us, Squire, by naming the date?"

Before Christmas Gladstone was Prime Minister, at the head of a strong and united Cabinet, and backed by a majority of a hundred 'elected on the distinct issue of Gladstone and the Irish Church.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Bishop Wilberforce*, vol. iii. p. 276.

## CHAPTER IV

## THE HEY-DAY OF REFORM

‘THE Session of 1869 was mainly occupied by the Irish Church Disestablishment Bill, over which the fight raged furiously for months. Among the incidents of the Session, I remember Mr. Vernon-Harcourt<sup>1</sup> making his Maiden Speech. Rather curiously, it was against a Bill repealing the Act which makes it necessary for a Member who takes office to offer himself again to his constituents for re-election. Many years after this,<sup>2</sup> Harcourt was himself in this position, and furnished one of the few cases in which the candidate so standing was defeated. He was beaten at Oxford by the big brewer of the place, and attributed his defeat to the “solid and liquid” arguments which were brought to bear against him.

—‘There was another Maiden Speech (at least, I think it was) this Session by an Irishman called Delahunty,<sup>3</sup> who commenced thus: “Mr. Speaker, Ireland is an Island, entirely surrounded with water.” It was this same Irish Member who, on one occasion in speaking, drew out of a small bag which he had on the seat beside him, when in search of papers, a hair-brush and a dirty shirt!

‘At this period the Game Laws were almost a burning question, and were brought much to the front, especially by the Scotch Members. I mention this as an illustration of how

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. Sir William Vernon-Harcourt (1827–1904), M.P. successively for Oxford, Derby, and West Monmouthshire.

<sup>2</sup> April 1880.

<sup>3</sup> M.P. for Waterford.

political matters ebb and flow, for I do not believe that at the last two General Elections—1895 and 1901—the Game Laws were mentioned in the address of a single Candidate. I am not saying that this is good or bad, but it seems to me very curious after the excitement which I have witnessed over the matter.

‘The Lords, of course, were very active over the Irish Church Bill. I happened to look in at the House of Lords just in time to hear the conclusion of Bishop Magee’s<sup>1</sup> famous speech against the Bill, and certainly it was a magnificent piece of eloquence. This brilliant Prelate was as keen for maintaining the established Liquor-Traffic as he was for maintaining the established Church, and once, in the course of defending it, said he would rather see England “free than sober,” a phrase which was hailed with rapture by the Liquor-Trade and their confederates, but the meaning of which I could never grasp. What antagonism there was between freedom and sobriety I could not see. He might as well have said “I would rather see a Bishop serious than sensible,” as though the two were opposed to one another. But the English people are swayed by phrases, and I think they like the silliest ones the best as a rule. The man who invented the word “Disintegration” in connexion with Home Rule hit it a tremendous blow. Everybody declared that whatever happened to them they would not be “disintegrated.”

‘But in spite of the Bishop’s real eloquence on the Irish Church Bill, and in spite of alterations made in the Lords, the Bill, at last—after some of the Lords’ injuries to it had been agreed to, as a compromise—got safely passed. And now, after thirty years of disestablishment in Ireland have passed away, I suppose that the best friends of the Irish Church will admit that all the prophecies of horrors and disasters have been disproved, and that disestablishment

<sup>1</sup> W. C. Magee (1821–1891), Bishop of Peterborough; Archbishop of York.



was the best thing that ever happened to the Irish Church. Yet people still say that it would be an awful calamity to the English Church. But the longer I live the more am I impressed by that verse : " But whether there be prophecies, they shall fail." While as to the extraordinary and dreadful things which are predicted with groaning and moaning, whenever any reform is imminent, I think of the lines :

' Some of our ills we have cured,  
And the gravest we still have survived :  
But what horrors we all have endured  
From the evils which never arrived !

' But, at the same time, it must be admitted that the blessings which we reformers predict very often " never arrive."

' The Session of 1870 was signalized by the passing of Mr. Gladstone's Irish Land Bill, and of Mr. Forster's <sup>1</sup> Education Bill. Both gave rise to the opposition which meets all great measures. But when people talk of the revolutionary nature of the Irish Land Bill, it should be remembered that the Second Reading—when the principle of a measure is affirmed—was carried by 444 to 11. The discussions in committee were, for the most part, very dull and uninteresting ; but the Tories, very naturally, fought their hardest for the landlords, who, whether Irish or English, have always been considered a kind of sacred creatures. I mentioned above the power of phrases, and it was quite " the thing " on the Irish Land Question to quote Palmerston's axiom : " Tenant-right means Landlord's wrong." Of course it would have been just as sensible to say, " Landlord's right means Tenant's wrong," and it was interesting to see Mr. Gladstone, so soon after Palmerston's death, legislating on the basis of the latter axiom.

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. W. E. Forster (1818-1886), M.P. for Bradford, 1861 to death ; Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education, 1868-1874.

‘ We had plenty of Ireland, as usual, during this Session, for there was a Peace Preservation Bill, which the Irish Members opposed sturdily. It is strange what an immense deal of trouble we go through to govern the Irish, instead of letting them govern themselves. When we “took them over,” so to speak, in 1800, Mr. Fox said he could not understand any sane person wishing to have eight million enemies of our Government in Ireland, instead of eight million friends. But the insanity still prevails, and after the experience of a hundred years in trying to govern a nation against their consent, we are, at the time of writing busily arranging for making another Ireland in South Africa. Always a wonderful people !

‘ Forster’s Education Bill was perhaps more exciting than the Land Bill—the Bible being the great bone of contention—when it was to be read, where it was to be read, by whom it was to be read, to whom it was to be read, who was to pay for its being read—these points were discussed *ad nauseam*.

‘ The reflection which occurs to me, in view of all these kinds of Debates, is : how strange that the whole nation should take such interest in reading the Bible, when they appear to pay hardly any regard to its precepts. Still I think they imagine that they have a kind of vested right in the Bible, and are jealous of others making use of it. President Kruger was much addicted to quoting the Bible and this appeared to aggravate English public feeling against him. At one of the celebrations for a victory over the Boers, in a village in the South of England, an old man, describing the doings, said : “ We burned old Kruger and his Bible too.”

‘ One of the great points of discussion in 1870 was whether the Bible should be read in the schools “ without note or comment.” I have heard of an old woman, who had clear views on this point. Her husband was blind and someone said that it must be a great deprivation to him not to be able to read. To which she replied : “ Oh no, I reads the Bible

to him every night, and many's the bits I puts in for his good ! ”

‘ Mr. Miall <sup>1</sup> was at that time a Member of the House. The speeches which he made at times, advocating Disestablishment, were some of the finest that I ever heard :—admirable language,—perfect logic,—his points put forcibly and clearly ; in fact, they were orations. Yet he had a rather poor delivery, and I doubt whether he made a great impression on the House. Of course he was very active in the Education debates, as the controversy really was one on Establishment ;—for teaching any sort of a creed in a school, with public money is not different, in principle, from teaching it in a Church to grown-up people, with public money.

‘ There was one rather memorable afternoon, when Miall strongly reproached the Government for having compromised on this principle in their Bill. This roused Gladstone, and I never saw him apparently so wroth (I never know very clearly, when the statesmen assume great wrath, whether it is genuine or only part of the game), and when he got up, turning to Miall, he said : “ If the Hon. Gentleman is not satisfied with us, for God’s sake let him carry his support somewhere else.” This I mention, as it illustrates how hot we get in the House of Commons, whenever Denominationalism comes to the front. Then is the time when the onlooker may say : “ See how these Christians hate.” But we got the Bill through somehow or other ; and, looking at its results, I think one may fairly say that Mr. Forster—in spite of his, to my mind, sad truckling to the Denominationalists—succeeded in passing a great measure.

‘ There were some interesting incidents in this Session, besides the two great measures which I have named. Mr. Jacob Bright,<sup>2</sup> one of the most honest politicians that I ever knew, and a more pronounced Liberal than even his brother

<sup>1</sup> Edward Miall (1809–1881), M.P. for Bradford.

<sup>2</sup> Jacob Bright (1821–1899), M.P. for Manchester.

John, carried the Second Reading of a Bill for giving duly qualified women the right of voting. This was very remarkable, for it is a wonder whenever any Bill which is sound, sensible, just, and absolutely logical gets forward in the House of Commons. But, of course, the Bill was disposed of at a subsequent stage. I have never been able to understand the terrible fear of women which men entertain. We have had sixty-three years of the reign of a Queen, who was absolutely unparalleled for her public virtue and private excellence; yet, by the law of the country over which she reigned so long, her fellow-women are debarred from taking an effective part in public affairs, which are considered safer in the hands of men, however degraded, drunken, or demoralized they may be.<sup>1</sup>

‘Also in this Session I moved a Resolution condemning the Opium-Traffic. I made pretty much the same speech as Lord Ashley (afterwards Lord Shaftesbury) had made on the subject many years before, and was met in much the same way—the ‘Previous Question’ being carried against me by about three to one. Mr. Gladstone made a long speech against the motion, explaining at length how the poppies were planted, how they were cultivated, how the crop was gathered in, etc., etc., as though he had done nothing but cultivate poppies all his life; but I remember one of the newspapers saying the next day that it was the worst speech he had ever made.

‘We go on to this day merrily poisoning the Chinese with opium as we do our own people with alcohol. Christianity and Civilization again!

‘The “Permissive Bill” had now become a “Hardy

<sup>1</sup> On the 29th of May, 1870, Queen Victoria wrote: ‘The Queen is most anxious to enlist everyone who can speak or write to join in checking this mad, wicked folly of “Women’s Rights,” with all its attendant horrors, on which her poor feeble sex is bent, forgetting every sense of womanly feeling and propriety.’



Annual," as measures are called which are regularly brought on in the House of Commons, and this year I had a good Division—only being beaten by thirty-three; but that was in reality mainly owing to a great portion of the House being away junketting at the opening of the Thames Embankment by the Prince of Wales. One night when we were in committee, the Speaker (Denison)<sup>1</sup> in his wig and gown, made a speech on the taxation of agricultural horses. This was notable, for the person called "Speaker," is the only Member who is expected not to speak in the House.

Towards the end of the Session, the French and German War broke out. A friend of mine, who was in the Government though not in the Cabinet, told me that, in talking to Mr. Gladstone about the war, he expressed his belief that the Germans would win—an opinion which, he said, almost made Mr. Gladstone angry, so firmly convinced was he (Mr. G.) of the military superiority of the French. Moral—how little even our greatest men know of the real condition of other countries. Yet we all of us profess to know exactly what ought to be done in them.

'On this occasion, as usual, the fire-eaters got up a scare, though I should have thought we were rather safer than before, when the two nations against whom we were always arming were busy destroying one another. But this was not the view of the House of Commons—representing doubtless the public, so an extra 2,000,000*l.* was asked for and an extra 20,000 men. This I resisted and got five men to vote with me, viz. my old friend, Mr. Potter,<sup>2</sup> the founder of the Cobden Club; Mr. Rylands<sup>3</sup>; Mr. Anderson<sup>4</sup>; Mr. Richard,<sup>5</sup> the old Peace leader; Sir Charles Reed<sup>6</sup> and Mr. Illingworth,<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. J. E. Denison (1800–1873); Speaker 1857–1872. Created Viscount Ossington.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for Rochdale.

<sup>3</sup> M.P. for Warrington.

<sup>4</sup> M.P. for Glasgow.

<sup>5</sup> M.P. for Merthyr.

<sup>6</sup> M.P. for Hackney.

<sup>7</sup> M.P. for Knaresborough.

the stalwart and only survivor of this forlorn hope. I little thought that I should live to vote, thirty years later, against similar supplies for ourselves, carrying on the iniquitous war for crushing out freedom in the Transvaal. The latter vote cost me my seat. A seat held at the cost of principle is not a thing to be proud of, but a situation of disgrace, and I can cheerfully wait for

‘ The safe appeal  
Of Truth to Time.

to vindicate my course.’

The Liberal party was now ‘on the top of golden hours.’ It was united, enthusiastic, victorious, full of energy, confidence, and hope. Great works of necessary reform, too long delayed, had been accomplished. Under a leader, supereminent in vigour, resource, and moral fervour, it had already redressed the two main grievances of Ireland, and had established a system of National Education in England; and the ardour for reform was still unabated. In the Session of 1871 Gladstone repealed the futile Ecclesiastical Titles Act, which had been passed twenty years before in a fit of Protestant panic, and he abolished Religious Tests in the Universities. These two achievements belonged to what he called ‘the mixed sphere of Religion and the Sæculum’: in the purely political sphere his action was even more decisive.

‘The great Government measure of 1871 was the Abolition of Purchase in the Army—a question which George Trevelyan had worked up splendidly and energetically outside the House. How the Colonels did splutter and stutter, shout and spout, howl and growl, grumble and mumble against this Bill! Their opposition was prolonged and determined, but their arguments appeared to me to be very slender—“more noise than wool,” as the old gentleman said when he shaved his pig. But Gladstone’s wonderful genius and energy

and determination got the Bill through at last. Then the Lords promptly threw it out. Gladstone, not to be beaten, accomplished what was called a *coup d'état*; i.e. he got the Queen to do by Royal Warrant what the House of Commons had done and the Lords had undone. The reader will probably ask: "Why could this not have been done at first, instead of having the matter brought into the House of Commons, and dealt with there for weeks and months?" The reader may ask that question, but I cannot answer it.

'The other principal Government measure was the Ballot, and against this the old crusted Tories in the House fought with the same blind fury and dogged pertinacity as the colonels had fought against the Army Bill. I do not remember how many days we spent over the Bill, but I know that there were seventy Divisions in connexion with it. But Gladstone, who was thoroughly determined to carry it, and at one period called a meeting of the Liberal Party on the point—pushed it steadily on to the Third Reading. Then the Lords threw it out. In a well-managed Public House a "chucker-out" is kept, who ejects people who become objectionable. The British Constitution is supplied with a few hundred Lords, who "chuck-out" anything which is useful. And then we prate proudly about the beauties of our self-governing system.

'I had my usual debate and Second Reading on the Permissive Bill with all the old arguments "pro and con," but not so "time-honoured" as they are at the present day, when, as the Archbishop of Canterbury says, there is absolutely nothing new which can be said on the Drink-Question. On this occasion I was beaten by seventy-two.

'Jacob Bright also had his "Hardy Annual"—the Woman's Suffrage Bill, and was beaten by sixty-nine, but elicited an excellent speech from Gladstone—virtually in favour of the Bill, though in true Gladstonian style concluding with declining to support it.



‘We had the usual discussions on ecclesiastical matters, and amongst others, one on the Revised Lectionary for the Church of England. One pities the poor Episcopalians for what they have to go through on account of their subservience to the State. The Baptists, Methodists, or Congregationalists can conduct their services without being dictated to by the House of Commons—an assembly composed of Jews, Roman Catholics, infidels, heretics, men of all religions or of no religion. But I once heard a Bishop, preaching in the Chapel Royal, explain (though I think he hardly saw the bearing of his words) that they are bound to the State by “golden chains.”

‘I don’t remember many Parliamentary incidents in this Session, but there was one rather amusing one in which Sir John Pakington<sup>1</sup> figured. He picked up a scrap of paper which it was supposed someone on the Government Bench had handed to Forster, and which contained the words: “We want to count Pakington out; he comes next.” Pakington thought it wise to bring the thing before the House, with the result which may be imagined. A night or two afterwards, someone picked up a pencil in the Lobby and carried it to old Mr. White,<sup>2</sup> the door-keeper—well-known and much regarded by Members in those days. “Oh,” he said, “we always send those things to Pakington now.”

‘We had not perhaps quite so much useless and mischievous talk on Foreign Policy as usual, though there was now and then oratory in connexion with the concluding Franco-German War, and an apparent desire to say or do something consoling to the French in their misfortunes, for in those days there was still some feeling among Englishmen for the beaten and the weak.

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. J. S. Pakington (1799–1880); M.P. for Droitwich 1837–1874. Created Lord Hampton 1874.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 37.



‘The old German Emperor was in the habit, after each great German victory, of telegraphing the result to his wife, and ascribing his triumph to the Almighty, with the “unctuous rectitude” which is so dear to warlike Christian nations. This gave rise to the famous verse (written, I believe, by Charles Neate of Oxford), parodying these telegrams, which ran as follows :

‘By Heavenly Grace, my dear Augusta,  
The French have come another buster :  
Ten thousand men are gone below—  
Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

‘It strikes me that something similar might be written now in connexion with our South African Policy—thus :

‘By shot and shell and Heavenly aid  
The Transvaal we’ve a desert made ;  
We’ve slain the men and burned their farms—  
All glory to the God of arms !

‘This ought to commend itself to the ministers of religion, who during the Transvaal War have extolled it with a fervour and fury worthy of the priests of Baal.’

Amid much that was sad and threatening, the year 1871 was marked by one incident of deep and hopeful significance. The United States had long had a just quarrel with us. Five privateers which, during the Civil War, had done a vast deal of damage to the Navy and commerce of the Union, were built in English Dockyards. The most famous of these was the *Alabama*. She captured seventy Northern vessels. She was manned by an English crew. Some of her gunners belonged to the Naval Reserve, and received English pay. She left port under the British flag ; and, in spite of warnings addressed to the Government by the American Minister, she got out to sea, and began a two years’ cruise of piracy and devastation. This deplorable

incident, and others like it, gave rise to a controversy which dragged on for years, and became increasingly acrimonious. In 1871, Gladstone solved the difficulty by sending a Commission to Washington to confer with an American Commission ; and, in his own words spoken nine years later, induced 'two nations, which are among the most fiery and the most jealous in the world with regard to anything that touches national honour, to go in peace and concord before a judicial tribunal to dispose of their painful differences, rather than resort to the arbitrament of the sword.'

Lawson's comment is as follows :

'Much interest was excited as to the arrangement with America for settling the Alabama Claims by Arbitration. I sometimes think that this—as time goes on—will be considered the greatest thing which Mr. Gladstone ever did. If this great, exciting, and complicated question could be settled by Arbitration, what great question is there between nations which could not be so settled? But the time is not yet. Mankind are still full of the idea that there is something "glorious" in cutting a number of throats before you settle a dispute. I well remember expressing my delight at this Alabama settlement to Mr. Bright. He, of course, was equally pleased. "But," he said, "it will be long before it bears much fruit," or words to that effect. Here he showed how much better he understood his fellow-men than I did.'

Lawson now resumes his narrative.

'Again in the recess, after the Session of 1871, I took part as usual in the Anti-Liquor Trade crusade and was joined by George Trevelyan, with whom I attended five meetings in five of our principal towns ; and at these meetings he made some of the most admirable speeches on the subject which I have ever heard. They were afterwards published in a small pamphlet. One night he and I were at a meeting in

Exeter, presided over by Dr. Temple, at that time Bishop of Exeter. The Liquor Party sent a strong contingent of roughs, who, not only broke up the meeting, but broke up the chairs, which formed good weapons for carrying on the row. One man in the meeting had his ribs broken. The Bishop, Trevelyan, and I were covered with flour or some white substance, so that we looked as though we had been at the "Derby." Ultimately one of the leading ruffians, in a white smock stained with blood, stood out on the platform to speak; but all that I remember him saying was: "We ain't paid to come here," which I suppose was meant to imply that the Bishop, Trevelyan, and I were paid for our services. The Bishop behaved splendidly, sitting perfectly quietly in his chair while the tumult raged around. Ultimately the police (rather reluctantly if I remember rightly) appeased the people, but the meeting was broken up, without our being able to speak.

'Many years after this, Dr. Temple, when Bishop of London, went down to speak on Temperance at Exeter and, in illustrating his subject, happened to say: "I never was drunk in my life." Whereupon the posters which came out next morning, announcing the contents of the newspapers, contained the headline: "Startling statement by a Bishop!"

'It was during this recess that the Prince of Wales all but died of typhoid fever. His recovery was hailed with delight, and later we had a Public Thanksgiving for it. I remember a great ecclesiastic (I think it was the Dean of Carlisle) saying that the Prince recovered as an answer to Prayer. One of his grooms, however, died of the fever, and one felt sorry that no one prayed for him.

'When Parliament assembled for the Session of 1872, we had to elect a new Speaker in the place of Denison who retired. The choice fell on the popular and excellent Brand,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Hon. H. B. W. Brand (1814-1892), M.P. for Lewes and Cambridgeshire; created Viscount Hampden 1884.

who had been one of the Whips of the Liberal Party, but who had never taken any prominent part in debate. The story in the House was that when Disraeli was told who the Liberal choice was, he said : " Brand—Brand, I don't think I know him by sight." "

The autumn of 1871 had been signalized by two incidents familiarly known as ' The Ewelme Scandal ' and ' The Colliery Explosion.' In each case Gladstone, while observing the letter of an Act of Parliament, violated, or seemed to violate, its spirit, in order to qualify a very worthy man for a very comfortable post. The Rev. William Harvey was not technically qualified to be Rector of Ewelme ; Sir Robert Collier was not technically qualified to be a member of the Judicial Committee. But in each case the technical difficulty was evaded, and the appointment made. This is Lawson's comment.

' A very good stick with which to beat Mr. Gladstone was found this year in the " Collier Incident." An appointment to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council fell vacant. The law was that anyone who should fill this post must first have held judicial office. Mr. Gladstone gave the appointment to Sir Robert Collier ; but, as Collier did not possess the necessary qualification, he was first made a Common Law Judge, sat for a few days, and then went on to the Judicial Committee. This, of course, was a grand opportunity for the Tories to have a " go " at Gladstone, and who could blame them for taking advantage of it ? However, we beat them on a Vote of Censure thereon, and rightly, I think, for though the thing was absurd and indiscreet, there was no moral corruption about it, as Collier was a very fit man for the post. Mr. Greene, a Tory member,<sup>1</sup> told a good story, in attacking the way in which Sir Robert Collier had been treated to qualify him for the post. He said that a gentleman at a

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Bury St. Edmunds.



country inn, hearing a great noise in the stable-yard below his window, looked out and saw the ostlers and stablemen leading a horse round the yard on which sat bare-backed the scullery-maid. On asking what all this was for, he was told : " We are going to sell this horse next week, and we want to be able to say that he has carried a lady ! "

' During the Recess Sir Charles Dilke<sup>1</sup> had been speaking and lecturing about the country on topics connected with Royalty and the expenses incurred in keeping it up. These addresses had a flavour of Republicanism about them, and of course in a country like ours excited not only interest but irritation. Riots ensued at some places. When the House met, Dilke courageously decided to move for certain returns bearing on the sums expended on Royalty ; as he would then be able to state his position to the House. He did so, and spoke for an hour and a half—the House listening to him fairly well, which I thought highly creditable to it, considering the tremendous prejudice against Dilke for what he had been saying out-of-doors. Gladstone replied vigorously, and I thought unfairly. With all my admiration for Mr. Gladstone, I have often thought him most unfair in Debate. On this occasion he simply tried to trample on Dilke, and having the whole House at his back, it was no difficult business to accomplish. Then Auberon Herbert<sup>2</sup> rose, but as he commenced by unnecessarily and imprudently declaring himself to be a republican, he caused an intense turmoil in the House, which lasted for upwards of an hour, during all of which time I think hardly a sentence which he spoke could be heard. I believe that at one moment someone crowed like a cock, though I cannot say that I heard it. If there was such a manifestation, it was, however, for the last time in the House of Commons ; therefore I mention it. The Division was 276 against 2—the two consisting of Anderson, one of the Glasgow Members, and myself. I think my vote was quite right, for the returns

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Chelsea.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for Nottingham.

asked for by Dilke were due to the country, and Mr. Gladstone did not at all benefit the Monarchy by withholding them. This was one of the most remarkable of the memorable "scenes" at which I have been present in the House of Commons. I think the trouble arose mainly from honest and good Auberon Herbert's declaration of republicanism. It is quite possible to say the right thing at the wrong time.

'The Ballot Bill again occupied a very large portion of the Session, all the old arguments being gone over again and again and again, with "vain repetitions such as the heathen use," but by sticking to it, we got it through. The Lords did not dare to throw it out again, but growled and groaned and then passed the Second Reading, reminding me of a couplet in Thackeray's delightful children's book, "The Rose and the Ring," where there is a picture of Giglio, an obstinate, thick-headed sort of Prince, who could not get his own way :—

'Giglio shows extreme disgust,  
Says he won't, but knows he must.

'However, when they got into Committee they plucked up courage a bit, and by their so-called amendments virtually made the Bill useless. But our House would not stand this and, as we were firm, the Lords had to give in, abandoned their amendments, and allowed the Ballot to become Law.

'I cannot part with the Ballot without some reflections. When Sydney Smith was growing old, he said that "all the illusions of his youth had vanished, except the Archbishop of Canterbury and raspberry-and-currant tart." I agree with him, barring the Archbishop. But in the days when the Ballot was a contentious matter, I was strongly under the illusion that it would be a measure of very far-reaching reform. I thought it would abolish intimidation, bribery, and even canvassing. Here, as usual, I had a very imperfect conception of what human nature is, and is capable of. In the old days of open voting, after every contest, there

used to be plentiful stories of men who would have voted for A., but who were coerced into voting for B. My impression now is that there was a good deal of humbug about these stories. When a man voted one way, and then put it about that he would have *liked* to vote the other, he to a certain extent obtained the sympathy of both parties. This class of men made no change because their votes were protected. As to the corruption, I suppose there is among bribers and bribees—as among thieves—a kind of honour, which prevents their betraying one another. Why the canvassing keeps still in full force is rather more difficult to explain; for it notoriously *has* been very much nullified by the Ballot, though I fancy there is very often a really honourable feeling that a promise must be kept—though I for my part most strongly hold that there is no moral right to demand such a promise. But when all is said and done, and my illusion has been fully described, the Ballot remains a great act, which has simplified and purified electioneering, and which I believe even the Tories would be very sorry to repeal. Perhaps even canvassing may die away in time, though not, I expect, for a long time. I have heard rather an amusing illustration of its working. A canvassing party went to the house of an elector in Manchester, but only his wife was at home. They explained to her what they had come for, and on leaving said: “You know what we want, we want your husband’s vote for Mr. Blank, do you think he’ll promise?” “Oh yes,” she said, “I think he’ll promise, he’s promised everyone who came yet!”

‘Tom Hughes<sup>1</sup> revived in this Session the opposition to the

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Lambeth, Author of *Tom Brown’s Schooldays*, in which he says: ‘That great event in the English year, the Derby, was celebrated at Rugby by many lotteries. It was not an improving custom, I own, gentle reader, and led to making books and betting and other objectionable results; but when our great Houses of Palaver think it right to stop the nation’s business on that day, and many of the Members bet heavily themselves, can you blame us boys for following the example of our betters?’



House adjourning for the Derby, which had about died away since the days of Mr. Hume. He was beaten by 212 to 58, which was not a bad beginning, as everything sensible is supported by very few people at first. Gladstone, in defending the adjournment, described racing as a "manly sport." Herein he differed from Charles Dickens, who once went to Doncaster to see the St. Leger race run, and wrote about the whole affair: "I can see nothing in it but cruelty, covetousness, calculation, insensibility, and low wickedness."

'The House, as a rule, adjourns its business for two hours on Ascension Day, and, in connexion with this, I remember Mr. Butt saying to me: "Ah! Two hours for God and a whole day for the Devil." "Unctuous Rectitude" again. In this Session I moved a Resolution, the effect of which was that we should, as soon as possible, get rid of Treaties with other countries, by which we guaranteed to fight for them and for their territories. Gladstone opposed it, and his main argument was that we should only observe such treaties, if it suited us to do so. This seemed to me very feeble, so I divided—ayes 126, noes 21. I still think that this was a most useful motion, which struck at the root danger in what we call our "Foreign Policy."

'What struck me all through this Session was the way in which the Government had continually to rely on the aid of the Tories, when any clear and strong Liberal principle was at stake, for its defeat. Over and over again did the Government carry their point by such aid, when fully one-half and often more of the Liberal Party voted against them. But this seems to be the ordinary course of politics in this country. The official Liberals and the official Tories unite when Radicalism has to be squashed. Herod and Pilate are made friends.

'This concludes my moralizing on the Session of 1872.'



Early in the Parliament of 1868, Gladstone had likened the English ascendancy in Ireland to a Upas Tree. The tree, he said, had three branches—the Established Church, the Land Law, and the system of National Education. The first and second branches he had now lopped down. In the Session of 1873 he made the onslaught on the third.

‘The session was memorable for the defeat of the Government by a majority of three on their Irish University Bill. I have heard that when this Government was formed, Mr. Gladstone himself predicted that they would deal successfully with the Irish Church and with the Irish Land, but that they would come to grief over Irish Education. Of course, the everlasting Denominational difficulty was at the bottom of it all. I have little or no recollection of the details of the Bill, but it was fiercely debated in the House; none of the religions appearing to be thoroughly satisfied with it. There was a tremendous demonstration of delight in the House over the defeat of the Government, who promptly resigned. But Disraeli declined to form a Government. He determined wisely to bide his time, and the event proved that he was right. So Gladstone had to go on again, but of course much of the moral force of the Government was lost for the rest of the Session. In financial matters, Lowe,<sup>1</sup> Chancellor of the Exchequer, used to make statements so confused and unintelligible that it was painful to listen to them. Why he was ever made Chancellor it is hard to say. I believe he told someone: “You know, I am a very bad hand at figures.”

‘My Permissive Bill was beaten by a very large majority this year—341 to 81. I think there was an idea that the opponents would come down in numbers and, by giving the Bill a crushing defeat, make an end of it for ever. If so, they were mistaken.

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. Robert Lowe (1811–1892), M.P. for the University of London; created Viscount Sherbrooke 1880.

‘ But Liquor was to the front, more or less, as usual : attempts being made already to mutilate the Licensing Bill of the former year in the interest of the Trade. It is notable that in discussion on these matters Vernon-Harcourt was pretty active against the restriction of the Trade.

‘ One good thing which we did was to carry a Resolution of good Henry Richard in favour of International Arbitration. I think it was on this occasion that, in the course of his speech, he indicated that missionaries were praiseworthy for their peaceable nature, on which I heard Mr. Gladstone say, in a half whisper, looking towards Mr. Richard : “ They always want a gunboat.”

‘ Among the social functions of 1873 was the visit to England of the Shah of Persia, who was entertained in various public ways. In his journal he made some interesting reflections on our manners and habits. He admired London, but wondered what happened to the houses in time of earthquakes. The butchers’ shops surprised him, and he said : “ Meat is good, but why expose it in the streets ? ” Here I sympathize with him and marvel that in streets lined with shops full of the most beautiful and elegant articles, you should suddenly come on bleeding carcasses of sheep and oxen and accompanying unpleasantnesses. Yet, such is the force of habit, the incongruity seems to strike no one.

‘ When the “ Derby ” was explained to him, and he saw the crowds hurrying to the course, he observed : “ That one horse can go faster than another has been long known, but why go to Epsom to see it ? ”

‘ At the end of the Session of 1873 Mr. Gladstone made certain changes in his Government. But, in spite of everything, the bye-elections went pretty steadily, as a rule, against the Liberals. One of them, however, had a different result. Old Sir Joseph Cowen, one of the Members for Newcastle, died during the recess, and, in January 1874, his son, Mr.

Joseph Cowen,<sup>1</sup> was returned by a majority of 1,000 over the Tory Candidate in his place. I consider him one of the most remarkable men with whom it has been my privilege to be acquainted. Converse with him was very pleasant. Thoroughly well-informed, original in his ideas, with a genial and unconventional way of expressing them, he was an excellent companion. At the time when he entered the House, he had unbounded popularity among the Liberals and working men of the North, where his eloquent and vigorous speeches had preached the true doctrine of Radicalism with (in my opinion) more power and acceptance than it had ever been preached before. He was possessed of ample means, and so had not the temptation in any way to desert his principles. I always had the idea that he was the very man to lead the Radical party, who, I think, have never had a real leader. My notion was that he might soon have become as great a political power in the country as John Bright was. He made a few very brilliant speeches in the House, which produced their effect, although spoken in the broadest Northumberland dialect, but, as time went on, he, somehow or other, "got wrong" with the Liberal Party—how or why, his most intimate friends were hardly able to explain,—and after about twelve years of Parliamentary life, retired from it, apparently in disgust, and occupied the remainder of his life with looking after his newspaper—the *Newcastle Chronicle*—which became one of the most bitter and pertinacious critics of almost everything which the Liberal Party did or attempted to do, or did not do. But I think that his earlier brilliant services to Liberalism in the North of England ought never to be forgotten.

‘Towards the end of January, 1874, Mr. Gladstone decided to dissolve Parliament and the result was a Liberal rout—

<sup>1</sup> 1831-1900.

the Tories getting a majority of about fifty. However, I retained my seat at Carlisle by a fair majority, and had, as a colleague, an excellent Carlisle man, Mr. Robert Ferguson. After the declaration of the Poll, when we were walking together down the street from the Town Hall to our Hotel, surrounded by thousands of excited citizens, I heard a man, pushing up, say, "Aye, Mr. Ferguson, I have worked hard for you to-day," on which a comrade retorted: "Nay! nay! thou knows thou was a Tory till the Poll was declared." It struck me that this man was a type of many politicians. Mr. Gladstone and his Government resigned as soon as the disastrous results of the General Election were known. To what those results will be attributed, or are attributed, by the philosophico-politic historians, I know not.

'No one ever can really explain the hidden springs from which electoral results proceed, but we are all entitled to make such guesses as we please. My notion is that the rage of the Publicans and big brewers at the Liberals' Licensing Measures<sup>1</sup> had a great deal to do with the Liberal defeat, and also that the Nonconformists were sulky on account of the favourable way in which Denominational Schools had been treated in Forster's Education Act. But probably there was now beginning that Conservative reaction of which we old Members have lived to see such amazing developments in the closing years of the Nineteenth Century.'

<sup>1</sup> A Licensing Bill was brought in by the Home Secretary, the Right Hon. H. A. Bruce, in 1871, and withdrawn in deference to clamour. A milder Act was passed in 1872. Mr. Bruce (1815-1895) was created Lord Aberdare, 1873.



## CHAPTER V

## REACTION

THE General Election of 1874 resulted in a Tory majority of fifty-six. Gladstone immediately resigned, being succeeded by Lord Beaconsfield; and, before the new Parliament met for the apparently humdrum business which awaited it, a fresh surprise burst upon the political world.

On the 12th of March Gladstone announced, in a public letter to Lord Granville, that he 'could not contemplate any unlimited extension of active political service,' and that he 'must have his entire freedom to divest himself of all the responsibilities of leadership at no distant time.' He said that he should be desirous, shortly before the Session of 1875, to consider the question of immediate retirement, and that, in the meantime, 'the need of rest would prevent him from giving more than occasional attendance at the House of Commons' during the session of 1874.

This sudden retreat from political conflict filled the Liberal party with dismay. According to the general law of human life, they only realized their blessings after they had lost them. They had grumbled at their chief, and mutinied against him, and helped to depose him. But now that his commanding genius was withdrawn from their camp, they found that they had nothing to put in its place. Their indignation waxed fast and furious, and was not the less keen because they had to some extent brought their troubles on themselves. They complained that Gladstone had led them into the wilderness of Opposition, and left them there to perish;

but Lawson seems to have maintained his perennial cheerfulness, and to have pursued his course without much regard to the altered conditions of the Liberal leadership.

‘The new Session (1874) was interesting. The two most exciting matters with which it dealt were alterations in the Laws of the Established Liquor-Trade and of the Established Church—a Spiritual and Spirituous Session it might be called.

‘A trifling incident occurred one day when, in some unexplained manner two strangers contrived to get into the House and to sit for some time on one of the Benches below the gangway. When the horrified attendants had their attention drawn to them, and proceeded to remove them, they turned out to be two Licensed Victuallers. “Ah,” said Mr. Bright, “why should they not come in? they knew it was their own House;” which it certainly was, and is to this day.

‘The new Government, knowing well that the Liquor-Trade was the best friend that they had got, felt that they must do something for them, and what would please them most would be relaxation of the provisions of the Bill which the Liberals had passed. So this business was allotted to Cross.<sup>1</sup> It happened that about the same time he brought in a Factory Bill dealing with the length of time during which workers should be employed. Hence a song arose, concerning him, in the streets with the chorus :—

‘For he’s a jolly good fellow,  
Whatever the Radicals think :  
For he’s shortened the hours of labour,  
And lengthened the hours of drink !

‘Of course the Government carried their Bill with its so-called Amendments to Bruce’s Act, but the Liberals fought fairly well on the question, and indeed we never had a stronger

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. Sir Richard Assheton Cross, M.P. for South-West Lancashire; Home Secretary; created Viscount Cross 1886.

case. All the evidence proved the beneficial effects of the provisions for shortening the hours of sale, but all that went for nothing—the Publicans were the masters of the House, and the public were sold to the Publicans. Someone shrewdly said that the Tories had carried the Constituencies to the cry of “The National Church and the National Beverage.”

‘On looking back at Parliamentary proceedings I think that this (with the exception of the appointment, years later, of the Parnell Commission) was the greatest outrage on public decency and decorum that I can remember.

‘The “Spiritual” matter was Russell Gurney’s<sup>1</sup> Public Worship Regulation Bill. This was a Bill really aimed at checking Ritualism. Harcourt took it up violently. Gladstone went strongly against it, and the two statesmen “went for” one another in an interesting though perhaps hardly edifying style. Disraeli for a time was neutral—like Brer Fox “he lay low and kept on sayin’ nuffin.” But one day when he found that a strong Protestant breeze was blowing, he spread his sails to the gale and came out strongly for the Bill as a measure to put down “Mass in Masquerade.” This became a famous catchword. I don’t think it had much meaning, but probably the alliteration made it popular, and it no doubt helped to pass the Bill. It seems strange that it requires so much time and effort to arrange for making the clergy obey the law. Why cannot they be brought before the magistrates when they are charged with illegal practices in their mode of conducting public worship, and if found guilty be fined “five shillings and costs”?

‘During one of the Debates on this Public Worship Bill, Mr. Gathorne Hardy<sup>2</sup> was making an impassioned speech on the subject, when suddenly he was interrupted by peals of laughter, which puzzled him much. The fact was that a

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Southampton.

<sup>2</sup> The Right Hon. Gathorne Hardy (1814–1906), M.P. for Oxford Secretary of State for War; created Viscount Cranbrook 1878.

large black cat all of a sudden sprang out from the Opposition benches below the gangway and darted across the floor of the House. Somebody has said that the most eloquent preacher in the world would lose all hold on his congregation if a sparrow should begin to fly about the church. Just so do the simplest things tickle and upset the House of Commons. I never saw any wild beast there again, except on one occasion when I saw a stout Member near the door skipping and jumping about, because a mouse approached him. I should like very much to make some joke on the above incident, connecting it with the "Jumping Cat," but as I do not see my way to make a tolerably good one, I must leave it to the reader to make one for himself.

' Besides our attention to matters connected with the publicans and the clergy, we used in this Session to have much talk about Clause 25 in Forster's Education Bill. It was a clause which was very offensive to Nonconformists, and a great bone of contention, but I don't know that I could now accurately describe its bearing even if I tried to do so. A friend of mine told me that in talking about it to Disraeli, the latter said: "Ah, the 25th Clause, we all go down to our constituents and say that the Constitution depends upon it, and we none of us know what it means."

' We had one of the periodical Navy "scares" this Session. There is nothing John Bull likes better than a good "scare." He spends any amount of money year after year in preparing plans for the destruction of his fellow-men, and then some expert comes along and tells him that they are useless, and that if anybody attacks him he is no better off than an "unprotected female." So this year we were told one of these usual stories. It happened that Mr. Hunt,<sup>1</sup> the First Lord of the Admiralty, was an exceedingly stout man, and I made rather a hit by saying that, even if we had, as we were told,

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. G. W. Hunt (1825-1877), M.P. for North Northampton shire.



a "phantom fleet," we at any rate had not a "phantom First Lord." Such very small change as this is sometimes useful in the House.

'I think this was the first year that I took a leading part in opposing the Adjournment for the Derby (which Tom Hughes had previously engineered) and was beaten by about three to one. This was one of the many "Forlorn Hopes" which I have lived to see successful—for I think the Derby adjournment is now virtually killed. In those days everyone laughed at the idea of stopping the scandal. Surely the words of Charles Greville (himself a Turfite) in his Journal indicate the true nature of racing—"Then the degrading nature of the occupation; mixing with the lowest of mankind and absorbed in the business for the sole purpose of getting money, the consciousness of a sort of degradation of intellect, the conviction of the deteriorating effect upon both the feelings and the understanding—all these things torment me, and often turn my pleasure to pain."

'How often in looking back on these forlorn hopes do I think of the lines—

'Though beaten back in many a fray,  
Yet freshening strength we borrow;  
And where the vanguard halts to-day  
The rear shall camp to-morrow.

'I think the summing up of this Session's work in my Parliamentary Journal is slightly interesting to look back upon. It runs thus, referring to the Tory Government—"They tried to pay their bill in full to the publicans, but public opinion was too strong for them and the publican had to be contented with short measure. They attempted by their Endowed Schools Bill to bully the Dissenters, but here again public opinion was too strong for them. They took up a Bill for reforming the practices in the Church and in this matter public opinion compelled them to proceed. On

the whole the proceedings tended to corroborate the idea that, with a wide suffrage and the Ballot, no Tory Administration is able to do much harm." The last sentence is one more proof of the folly of prophesying, but it reminds one also of the prayer for Parliament put up by a Scotch minister—"Oh Lord, prevent them from doing any harm."

'It was one day in the summer of 1874 that I was invited to attend a celebration in connexion with opening a lot of new workmen's houses on Shaftesbury Park, managed by a company which allows no Public Houses on the property. On getting on to the temporary platform I found myself to my surprise alongside of Mr. Disraeli, the Prime Minister. This, I think, was the only occasion on which he and I co-operated in a public meeting, and it is memorable to me, as he made a short speech saying the Company had "solved the problem as to the Housing of the Working Classes." Quite so. Keep out the Liquor-Traffic, and we needn't trouble ourselves very much more over the matter. For some reason or other this Company has also a rule that no places of worship are to be erected on the property—at least they had that rule at one time. A friend of mine—Mr. Caine—got into conversation with one of the inhabitants of the property, and asked him how they got on without Public Houses. The man said they did very well, and that those who could not do without drink (or thought they could not, which is much the same thing) had to buy it outside and bring it home. Then Mr. Caine said: "But how do you do about the Means of Grace?" "Means of Grace," said the man, "we reads the *Weekly Dispatch*!"

'Early in 1875 Mr. Gladstone announced that he could no longer lead the Liberal Opposition. His reason for doing so did not seem to be absolutely clear, but I see that I noted in my Journal that it appeared to be "principally, apparently, for the purpose of writing furious articles in magazines against

the Pope." I believe that Mr. Gladstone's heart was more thoroughly in two subjects than in any other, viz. Finance and Theology. Brilliant as he was as Chancellor of the Exchequer, more brilliant would he probably have been as Archbishop of Canterbury—but whether the Church of England could have survived him in that capacity is another question. But wondrous were his powers of exposition and explanation. It was said that when Garibaldi was in England a very well-known lady of title was so much taken up with him that she had some longings in the matrimonial direction. But she was told that the General already had a wife in Italy. "Oh," she said, "but could not Mr. Gladstone explain her away?"

'But, whatever his reasons were, we Liberals found ourselves without a Parliamentary leader, so we had to select a new one. There seemed to be only two possible men—Lord Hartington<sup>1</sup> and Mr. Forster. For a time it seemed doubtful who would be chosen, but by and bye Forster withdrew from the competition, and Hartington was unanimously chosen at a meeting of the Party held in the Reform Club, with Bright in the chair. Bright expressed great satisfaction at the "consolidation" of the Party, but no one said anything about what the Party was to do. I was not present at the meeting, and did not think it was of vital importance whom we chose. My view of the two was embodied in these lines:—

'Hartington, if you prefer him,—  
 Self-possessed, and cool, and calm,—  
 No impetuous motives stir him,  
 He'll do neither good nor harm.  
 Or there's Forster, half a Quaker,  
 (In that pedigree he glories),  
 Forster—School-Board mischief-maker,  
 Forster—idol of the Tories.

<sup>1</sup> (1833–1908) M.P. for the Radnor Boroughs. Became Duke of Devonshire 1891.

‘My feeling was perhaps a little like that of the man working near the divergence of two roads, both, however, leading by different routes to the same town. On being asked by a traveller which was the best, he said : “ Well, whichever one you take, you’ll wish you’d taken the other.”

‘ But Hartington turned out not a bad leader, his strong common-sense and imperturbable temper standing him in good stead. If he ever was excited over anything in his life, he never showed any excitement. An old Parliamentary joke used to be that he was the only man who ever yawned in the middle of his own speech. I remember on the day Parliament met, and he had to make his first speech as Leader, that Forster said to me afterwards, quite genuinely and heartily : “ I thought how much better he did it than I would have done it,” which was rather pleasant to hear him say.

‘ So far as my recollection of this 1875 Session goes, I can hardly tell what was its main feature. But perhaps the most memorable incident was the Plimsoll one. Mr. Plimsoll<sup>1</sup> had devoted himself to an attack on rotten ships, which he alleged were numerous and were sent out by money-seeking owners, totally regardless of the lives of the sailors. Some of these alleged malefactors he unmistakably pointed to, and this led to angry denials on their part. He brought in a Bill dealing with this evil, but the Government pooh-poohed it, and gave him no real assistance. So, one afternoon when the matter was under discussion, he sprang from his seat on to the floor of the House, gesticulating, shaking his fist at the Treasury Bench, shouting out something about murdering villains, and generally deporting himself like one possessed. This, of course, caused great excitement and confusion, and as he declined to retract the words about villains, he had to retire from the House, while Disraeli proposed that he be reprimanded. On this,

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Derby.



Fawcett<sup>1</sup> got up, who was always a little pompous in his style of speaking, and alluding to the scene just enacted and kindly doing what he could for Plimsoll, said that he had "advised him to take a walk." So the reprimanding business was adjourned for a week, at the end of which time Plimsoll made an apology, which satisfied the House. But mark the result of all this. The "scene" attracted the attention of the country to the shipping scandal which Plimsoll attacked, and the Government thought it prudent at once to bring in a Bill of their own, which they carried before the end of the Session, and took great credit for, Disraeli making so much of it in a speech at the Mansion House that it was written that he had explained then—

‘How the whole of his life one long effort had been  
To provide for the lives of the Merchant Marine.

‘The somewhat spiteful Parliamentary gossip of the day had it that this very successful "coup" of Plimsoll's was not the result of "spontaneous combustion" and sudden outburst, but that he had planned it all, before coming down to the House, and had brought a brush and comb in his pocket, in full expectation of being committed to that receptacle for Martyrs, Miscreants, and Monomaniacs—the Clock Tower.

‘I have sometimes wondered what would have been the effect if I had thought of a manœuvre like this before Plimsoll did, and had suddenly jumped up, danced about the floor of the House, and, shaking my fist at Mr. Bass and the Brewers, had called them murdering villains. Certainly my case would have been infinitely stronger than Plimsoll's; since, for one person destroyed by water, there are scores destroyed by beer, and the only people who benefit by the destruction, are, in the case of Beer, the Beer-sellers, and in the case of dangerous ships, the ship-owners. But such reflections are

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. Henry Fawcett (1833-1884), M.P. for Hackney.

vain, for Plimsoll's performance could only be successful once in a century, so there was no opening for me to execute a Parliamentary War Dance.

'How few people see the right moment for doing a right thing. A critic of Lord Randolph Churchill once wrote that his distinguishing characteristic was that he "saw a point in the House of Commons half a minute before anyone else saw it." In most of our cases it is the reverse, and we could make excellent speeches in a Debate, half an hour after it is over.

'Much talk arose this Session in connexion with the Tichborne Case, which attracted the public attention for months and years. An impostor claimed the Tichborne title and estates, and to deal with the case involved almost interminable law-proceedings, conducted by our ablest judges and lawyers. To the ordinary mind the case of "the Claimant," as he was called, seemed absurd enough, but for some reason or other multitudes of the public became his strong partisans. It is very difficult to gauge what was the state of their minds, but the words of an old woman seemed somewhat to summarize it. She, a strong adherent of the Claimant, was told that he was only an impostor, to which she replied: "What if he is an impostor, is that any reason why he should be kept out of his rights?" The "discerning public" is a very curious body.

'In the House of Commons this matter came up chiefly in connexion with Dr. Kenealy, who (although in many respects a very undesirable person) had been returned to Parliament for Stoke-on-Trent by a very large majority, simply as the champion of the Claimant. We used to have considerable scenes with him in the House, where he had hardly any sympathizers, except Mr. Whalley,<sup>1</sup> who was a great Protestant champion in those days—a kind of understudy of the well known Mr. Newdegate.<sup>2</sup> He now vigorously supported Kenealy in ridiculous motions which he used to make in con-

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Peterborough.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for North Warwickshire.

nexion with the Claimant case. The Doctor moved one day for a Royal Commission to enquire into the whole trial, but he literally made out no case, and he and Whalley had to "tell" in their Lobby only one vote. This was the vote of Major O'Gorman,<sup>1</sup> a most extraordinary Irishman, who, in his way, used at that time to afford great amusement to the House. Once, in a speech outside, describing the condition of Ireland, he said that she once had eight million inhabitants, but they had fallen to five million; whereas England, in the same period, had added to her numbers, six million; "so," he said, "Ireland has now a million people less than an uninhabited Island." I quoted this one day when speaking in the House of Commons, and sitting down soon after by the side of the Major, he assured me that it was "quite correct; he had it from an eminent statistician."

'All the Tichborne business is now matter of ancient history, but it was a burning question for a few years, and I have heard Bright say that he had read the whole of the (almost interminable) evidence in the case, at which I rather wondered.

'In this Session (1875) we used to have great fights over the Irish Sunday Closing Bill, and once Gladstone came to our assistance with a vigorous speech, one of his great arguments being that, as the Irish people wished for Sunday Closing, they ought to have it. But it was several years before we got him to see that the people's wishes ought also to be consulted in any part of the kingdom as regards Monday, Tuesday, etc. as well as Sunday. The upper classes, as they are called, are so impressed with the idea that drinking is a source of happiness to their poorer brethren, as it is to themselves, that they are averse even to giving them the chance of themselves diminishing the temptation thereto. I remember a writer in the *Saturday Review*, in an article opposing Sunday Closing, declaring that "if he lost the cellar key, Sunday

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Waterford.

would be no Sunday to him." That reminds one of the popular saying that the Public House is the poor man's cellar—to which Mr. Burt<sup>1</sup> finely replied, when advocating Local Veto : " In that case give the poor man the key of his cellar."

'It is interesting to remember that almost all the working men who have been returned to the House have supported the scheme for giving to the public the power of self-protection against the Liquor-Traffic. Yet the great argument of those who live by and support the Liquor-Monopoly is that any interference with it would injure the working classes. The Working Man is the "Uriah the Hittite" of politics. Whenever any iniquity is to be defended, he is put in the forefront of the battle.'

Throughout the last twelve pages, Lawson has been speaking for himself. It may be expedient at this point to show the aspect which his character and genius presented to a dispassionate onlooker at this central period of his career. I quote from the *Spectator* for June 19, 1875 :—

'Country gentlemen make just the sort of humourists which the House of Commons likes best. Their Squirearchical simplicity, their downright plain-spoken ways, their privileged inability—whether real or assumed, matters not—to follow the finer distinctions which soften down the superficial paradoxes of life,—the solidity of their self-respect, the *bonhomie* of their frank, out-of-doors manner, the thoroughly national character of their sagacity, and the complete understanding between them and the House as to the prepossessions which they really feel and the prepossessions which they have a prescriptive right to assume, form a sound, firm basis for mutual understanding and good feeling on which it is very easy indeed to build up a more cordial relation. Mr. Henley, the sagacious and hard-headed Member for Ox-

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. Thomas Burt, M.P. for Morpeth.



fordshire, has this kind of understanding with the House, and he hardly ever speaks without eliciting some cordial recognition of the shrewdness and force of his homely, vernacular English. The late Mr. Henry Drummond,<sup>1</sup> who also was a Tory, and who, on the discussion of the Bill to legalize marriage with a deceased wife's sister, begged its honourable proposer to marry his grandmother like a man, and have done with it, was an admirable specimen of the type of the kind of humour, of a Tory type, appropriate to the country gentleman, though he had a distinct touch in him of the disciplined man of business as well. And Sir Wilfrid Lawson is an equally good specimen of the Radical variety of the squire type,—the variety, that is, which makes the most of the inconsistencies and absurdities of life as it is, and ignores the inconsistencies and absurdities of the proposed innovations or reforms. The predecessor of Sir Wilfrid in the favour of the House, Mr. Bernal Osborne, did not belong to the class of squires at all, but rather to that of the *habitués* of Clubs, and though he was a witty man of the world, there was a sort of hackneyed, dinner-table, tone about his jokes which took off all their freshness. There is nothing of this with Sir Wilfrid, and though he must beware of such poor and conventional puns as he made at the public meeting on Monday as to being supported at once by a Cardinal and a Pope—he meant Cardinal Manning and Mr. Pope—he will keep his place easily enough in the favour of the House of Commons, and without losing the power of speaking seriously and with weight, when he chooses, if he will only take care not to indulge the House with conventional banter, and so injuriously dilute the unique personality which gives the charm to his speeches. For Sir Wilfrid's position, though it is the position of an oddity, depends in a very great degree indeed on the apparently off-hand and unpremeditated character of his criticisms,—the criticisms of an impatient Radical squire who, as he himself once boldly declared of

<sup>1</sup> (1786–1860): Irvingite Apostle, and M.P. for West Surrey.

every statesman left to us *except* Lord Russell, "does not care two straws" whether the British Constitution be adhered to or not. If Sir Wilfrid were ever to give to his humour the effect of care and preparation, he might no doubt continue to be popular; for any one who can make a good joke is welcomed in our dull House of Commons; but he would lose the sort of reputation he has for blurting out caustic Radical remarks on the absurdities and paradoxes of things as they are, just as Mr. Drummond used to blurt out caustic Tory remarks on the silly panaceas proposed for mending them. We were glad, therefore, to notice on Wednesday, that in speaking for the Permissive Bill, Sir Wilfrid was not at all oppressively funny, though he was evidently disposed to give his antagonists as good as they gave. And we hope he will carefully avoid the mistake made by Mr. Bernal Osborne, who so accustomed the House to his jokes, that even when he intended to speak seriously he was greeted with shouts of laughter, to his own great chagrin. Nothing but artificiality and exhaustion can come of so false a relation to the House of Commons as that.

'Sir Wilfrid Lawson, however, is, we believe, too shrewd a man, and has too much real sense both of humour and of dignity, to fall into such an error. A maternal grandson of the late Sir James Graham, and a Cumbrian both in independence of character and that leaning to eccentricity which comes of solitude, he can never become the mere jester of the House of Commons. For he has inherited from his grandfather none of that pliancy and tendency to adapt himself to the times which marked Sir James Graham; nor certainly does his considerable fund of humour derive from that source. There is nothing of the canny Scotchman, though there is much of the quaint dash of Cumbrian wilfulness, in his composition. He evinces very strongly both that tenacious literalness of mind which makes the contrasts of life appear greater than they really are, and also that flexibility of

mood which heightens the colours of their contrast, and brings them into the sharpest relief. He is one of those,—and they are many,—who can hardly see even the child change into the man without feeling disposed to set before it the inconsistency and radical departure from first principles implied in the change. Thus his frequent and very amusing remarks on the paradoxes of modern Christianity, often imply that, if Christians had been what they ought to have been, their mode of living now would be very much what it was when they numbered only a few Galilean peasants; and in the same way, his criticisms of our policy and institutions, generally seem to reproach the British Empire for growing as it does, and to aim at reducing it to something which can be more easily governed on the abstract principles of Radicalism. Sir Wilfrid Lawson is, we fancy, one of the few true English adherents of the Ballot, of the reduction of the Army, of the non-intervention policy, of the doctrine that our colonial territory ought to be reduced, and of strong decentralisation schemes of the Home Rule and Permissive Bill character, still left us. And yet there is nothing really of the didactic Radical doctrinaire about him. He has too much humour for that. He said on Wednesday, evidently very sincerely, that nothing annoys him like being called the “Apostle of Temperance,” and that he had no more right to the title than Mr. Bass himself. Indeed, probably he has not belief enough even in the Radical nostrums to be the apostle of anything. He is sceptical at bottom of all political measures. So far as he believes in his own political school, it is because all he recommends is extremely humble and destructive of the pride of statesmen. He likes modest attempts. Only on Wednesday he disclaimed and abandoned to the Government what he termed in derision their “large and comprehensive measures.” For himself, he refrains his soul and keeps it low to matters like the passing of a Permissive Bill intended to enlarge, as he puts it, the self-governing power of a local



population in relation to an important detail of the social system, or like the removal of Bishops from the House of Lords, or like an attempt to persuade the House that it is hardly decent to adjourn for two hours on what it regards as the sacred feast of the Ascension, while it adjourns over the whole Derby-day as if that were a feast of infinitely higher claims on a Christian people ; or like the admirably simple measure which, with the boldness of true genius, he proposed to substitute for the Public Worship Regulation Act, —namely that any clergyman found breaking the law should be fined five shillings and costs at Petty Sessions. And of course, as Sir Wilfrid Lawson believes that if any legislation or policy is good at all, it can only be of the least ambitions, not to say the most humiliating kind, he is always most amusing when he takes in hand either the statesmen or the policies with any ambitious flavour about them. His fancy is never more tickled than by the spectacle of men of the world professing great zeal in the interests of popular religion. His happy description of Mr. Disraeli's and Sir William Harcourt's attitude in relation to the Public Worship Regulation Bill, when he called them " these two holy men, these two pillars of Orthodoxy, the modern Luther and the modern Melanchthon, who in moving terms have been imploring the House of Commons—that great Assembly of Jews, Turks, Heretics, and Infidels—to maintain Religion and put down Ritualism," was evidently inspired by his natural distrust of the very ambitious Protestantism of those distinguished pillars of the Church. And as to great strokes of policy, he has seldom been more gravely entertaining than he was in deprecating the annexation of Fiji. Of course the annexation of the Cannibal Islands was a theme on which even an ordinary Member of Parliament, with any wish to defeat the policy, would have been sure to attempt a joke ; but Sir Wilfrid drew a really ludicrous picture of the fear entertained lest the 20,000 remaining cannibals should come down from the mountains



into the plains and eat the 107,000 Methodist converts, and of the only feasible mode of preventing this calamity by despatching a few companies of the British Army,—that great branch, as he called it, of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel,—to kill them and burn their villages, and by sending in their wake teachers to declare to them the truths of the Gospel of peace. Whether it be that Sir Wilfrid is so much a sceptic at heart that all idealism, even British nationalism and Imperialism, sounds to him like buncombe, or whether he really believes that civilisation has done more harm than good in the world, certain it is that his mixed literalism and scepticism never show to more advantage as elements of humour than when he is trying to make a grand British policy or a magniloquent British orator ridiculous.

‘Again, the literalism of the interpretation which he immediately applies to what his opponents say, helps him to very effective hits at the shortcomings of their logic. He is very skilful in pushing their assumptions to their legitimate consequences. Thus he gravely argued that, if it were right at all to make a public and official holiday of the Derby-day the Speaker ought to go to the Derby “in his State coach, drawn by brewers’ horses, as he did at the thanksgiving for the Prince of Wales’s recovery,—in which case a great number of the Commons would willingly attend him, and protect him from the people he would meet there”; and on Wednesday, in refuting the arguments against the Permissive Bill, he entreated the Government to apply their principles in practice, by restraining those few but barbarous landlords who, out of their own heads, had deprived the population in their parishes of licensed drink-shops, and bringing in a Bill to provide, in all such cases of hardship, for “places where people might get drunk again.” And no doubt the wide discretion given to the Magistrates even to prohibit Public Houses in any district by refusing all licences within it, is not different in *principle* from the discretion which Sir Wilfrid

proposes to concede to two-thirds of the ratepayers to prohibit them also.

‘Sir Wilfrid Lawson’s humour is not of the most searching kind. It does not sweep the whole earth,—and the heavens too for that matter,—as the Yankee humour does, in search of grotesque analogies for the most trivial details of life. What gives it its pleasant flavour is that it is the genuine product of the character of a shrewd and benevolent country gentleman, whose intellect having begun to stir beneath the well-defined traditions and prejudices of the class of English Squires, and to perceive the insecurity of the ordinary political assumptions of that least active-minded of castes, has taken rather kindly to the amusement of caricaturing to himself and to others the paradox involved in any feeling of satisfaction, however moderate, with things as they are,—though without indulging any but the least sanguine of all anticipations as to the improvements which may be expected in things as they may be. There is a quicksand at the bottom of Sir Wilfrid Lawson’s imagination, as there is in that of all true humourists, but it is a quicksand of limited dimensions, and not such quicksands as we see spreading away under the loose foundations of many of the Yankee humourists’ life. Still, the limited imagination of a country squire, when it begins to find the bog of general scepticism quaking beneath it, yields humour of a very specific and interesting kind. And Sir Wilfrid Lawson’s rich voice and easy genial manner add to the charm. We trust the admiration of the present very dull House of Commons, which finds in him almost its only entertainer, will not spoil him, or make him draw too liberally on his abundant but by no means inexhaustible resources.’

For at least two years after the General Election of 1874, the Liberal Party remained in a condition of torpor and collapse. The fact that Gladstone, with all his fight and fire, had retired from Leadership, and had been succeeded by

the lethargic and unemotional Hartington, completed the collapse and deepened the torpor. But now revival was at hand, and the dry bones were soon to be stirred by a breeze blowing from a very unexpected quarter. In the autumn of 1875 an insurrection had broken out in Bulgaria, and the Turkish Government despatched a large force to suppress it. This was soon done, and suppression was followed by a hideous orgy of massacre and outrage. A rumour of these horrors reached England in 1876, and public indignation instantly and spontaneously awoke. Gladstone suddenly reappeared upon the scenes, pushed Hartington aside from his position of titular command, and flung himself into the agitation against Turkey with a zeal which in his prime he had never equalled. The results of his activity, culminating in the 'Midlothian Campaign,' of 1879, will be narrated in due course. Meanwhile, we return to Lawson's tranquil narrative.

'The Session of 1876 was an interesting one in many ways. Disraeli's purchase of shares in the Suez Canal caused much discussion. It was much criticized and condemned, but I believe the result has been such that the purchase ought to be put to the credit of Mr. Disraeli.

'A circular had been put out by the Government, virtually requiring that slaves who had taken refuge on our ships should be returned to their masters. This also caused much discussion, and it had to be altered. John Bull is still opposed to slavery, and when he can be got to understand that anything of the kind is being encouraged, he gets angry. But the great difficulty is to get him to understand anything.

'But perhaps our principal excitement in this Session (1876) was over the Royal Titles Bill, by which it was proposed to give the Queen the title of Empress of India. I cannot now remember very distinctly the arguments "pro" and "con," but there was much debating over the matter, Cowen making an especially brilliant speech against the measure. It seemed



to me a little strange that 670 gentlemen should get excited over a name. But one remembers the line :—

‘ These little things are great to little men.

And we should never forget the maxim which Barnum, the great showman, said had been his talisman to fortune, viz. : “ Men are only grown-up children.”

‘ On an Education Bill of the Government we had endless wrangling and forty-six Divisions—the whole thing being, as usual, about Denominationalism, that perpetual source of strife when once it creeps into legislative action. The “ compassing of sea and land to make one proselyte ” led of old to unsatisfactory results, and efforts in that direction in representative Assemblies end equally badly.

‘ Of course the Bill got through, backed by the Government’s large majority. I think it was on this Bill that Mr. Chamberlain made his Maiden Speech—a very good one—for he was then one of the leading anti-denominationalists and a prominent member of the Birmingham group, who fought so hard and so well for unsectarian education. This wonderfully clear-headed and able man was returned for Birmingham at a bye-election in July 1876. He was introduced by John Bright and Joseph Cowen, and was personally known to very few Members of the House. It is by sheer ability and determination that he has forced his way to the front in politics. We shall hear more of him as we get on with these Reminiscences. Enough now to say that to have watched his career is as instructive as it is interesting, and perhaps one may say as saddening as it is surprising.

‘ There is nothing disreputable in changing your opinion. Sydney Smith said that “ whenever he heard a man say he had an unalterable opinion, he knew he was an unalterable jack-ass ”—which is all very well, but is not much consolation to a Radical who sees a fellow-Radical go from good to bad, from bad to worse, and from worse to worst,



and is quite unable to grasp the reasoning which has led him on this course.

‘In this Session the “Bulgarian Atrocities” (on which so much turned later in our home politics) began to trouble us in the House, and the Liberals, under Mr. Gladstone’s incitement, got much irritated at Disraeli’s apparent apathy in the matter, or indeed his almost evident sympathy with the Turks.

‘Here again we see how the political kaleidoscope shows us strange changes. Mr. Gladstone was one of the Cabinet which got us into the Crimean War, to defend the “integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire”—surely one of the strangest objects for which a free and Christian nation ever took up arms. Twenty years pass by, and we have the same Mr. Gladstone unable to find words to describe the cruelty, injustice, and wickedness of the Ottoman rule.

‘Liquor came to the front in this Session, 1876, as usual. My Permissive Bill was beaten by a rather larger majority than usual—218. One new incident in the Debate thereon was, that I was supported by Dr. Kenealy, and I recollect how uncomfortable I felt when he, for some reason or other, spoke well of me. But he made amends for this by using a phrase which I had never heard before, but which I thought good as describing the Liquor-Trade. He called it the “Intoxicating Interest.” It has always seemed as strange to me that good Christians should support the cause of Intoxication at home as that they should support the cause of Islam abroad. But, no doubt, for both courses they can give reasons perfectly satisfactory—to themselves.

‘It was Irish Sunday Closing which was the chief topic bringing Liquor into Debate this Session (1876). Professor Smythe,<sup>1</sup> one of the most charming and estimable of Irish Members, succeeded in defeating the Government with a Resolution in its favour, supported by a splendid speech from

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Co. Londonderry.

Bright. Major O'Gorman made one of his Low Comedy speeches against the Resolution. Among other things he tried to explain what is meant by moderation. He said : " If a man does not exceed, he is quite entitled to walk away with what he can carry." These definitions with regard to drinking and its results are very puzzling. In our Petty Sessions our principal business is generally more or less connected with drunkenness, yet there is no legal definition of drunkenness. When I was on the Bench one day in Cumberland there was one of the usual long enquiries as to whether a man in a certain case was really drunk ; and a witness for the defence, a retired barmaid, whom the solicitor defending the case called, evidently thinking her to be an expert in the matter, gave evidence. At last I asked her when a man was really drunk, and she replied : " When he falls down and cannot get up again." She was merely giving a prosaic version of the well-known lines :—

‘ Not drunk is he, who from the floor  
Can rise again and ask for more :  
But drunk is he who prostrate lies,  
Without the power to speak or rise.

‘ Major O'Gorman continued this speech in an intensely comical vein. I remember how Mr. Gladstone was sitting listening to him with almost a scowl on his face, for he had a very wholesome distaste for this broad buffoonery in the House. But by and bye the Major began to talk about the Irish farmers, describing them as " men who loved their landlords and whose landlords loved them," adding that they were men " whose lives ought to have been written by Plutarch." That fairly broke down even Mr. Gladstone, and he joined as heartily as anyone in the explosion of laughter which the Major had produced. I think the idea of Irish farmers having their lives written by Plutarch was one of the funniest things I ever heard in the House.

‘I had left London before Disraeli made his last speech in the House of Commons (August 11, 1876). The next morning the newspapers announced that he had gone to that bourne from which no politician returns—the House of Lords—under the title of Earl of Beaconsfield. The subject-matter of his discourse was the Bulgarian atrocities ; he, of course, making out the best case which he could for the Turks. Eighteen years later Mr. Gladstone made his last speech in the House of Commons. It was a strong denunciation of the mischievous privileges of the House of Lords. It is characteristic of the two statesmen that the last words of one should be in defence of an abuse ; and the last words of the other an attack on an abuse.

‘I felt sorry when Disraeli left us. Apart from what he or Gladstone said or advocated in the House, the very sight of the two antagonists sitting opposite one another, night after night, as absolutely different as two men whom God ever made could be, was an unfailing source of interest. Then, when they came into action, the contrast was even more marked. To vulgarize the situation, one might compare their strife to a fight between a hawk and an owl—the one man all fight, energy, and activity ; the other solid, silent, sagacious, biding his time, and not striking till he had a good opportunity. I wonder whether the verdict of history on these two men, a hundred years hence, will at all bear out my superficial sketch.

‘I think that all old Members, of every Party, will admit that when Disraeli left us one great charm of the House was gone. Someone has described him cleverly—if ill-naturedly—as a “third-rate statesman, a second-rate author, and a first-rate actor.” There is something in this, but I should be inclined to rate him more than second-rate as an author, for I think his novels have a charm and a point which are all their own.

‘I observe that I have noted down the Session of 1877



as a "miserable" one, but on recalling its incidents, I am inclined now to look on it as one of great interest. For one thing, it was in this Session that Parnell<sup>1</sup> and Biggar<sup>2</sup> may be said to have got their obstructive tactics into thorough working order. In those days I used to look upon them as partly senseless, partly evil-minded, and altogether a nuisance. But one sees now how, with shrewdness and perseverance, they were working for the interest of their country. Certainly, they practised their obstruction with the utmost coolness. For instance, on one occasion Mr. Biggar kept on speaking interminably from below the gangway, making long quotations from the Blue Books and so forth. The Speaker, at his wits' end to find any expedient for stopping him, at last remarked that he "could not hear the Hon. Member," on which Mr. Biggar said: "Well, Mr. Speaker, I will come nearer," and proceeded to march up above the gangway, carrying his Blue Books with him. There was a story of him—probably not true—that, after a very hard week's obstruction, he fell asleep while in Church on Sunday, and being suddenly awakened, called out: "I move that the House be counted." Subsequently I formed a high opinion of Biggar as a politician. Utterly wanting in tact, deficient in taste at times to the verge of brutality, with no powers of speech and his "bodily presence contemptible," he was nevertheless, in my opinion, as honest and single-minded a Member of Parliament as I ever met. Neither threats, ridicule nor remonstrance could turn him aside when what he believed to be the good of his country was in view. He well knew that Drink was its greatest enemy, and he never, like some of his compatriots, truckled to the Liquor-Power. Perhaps this made me unduly appreciative of him. But his last words are well worth remembering by all who take an interest in the welfare of Ireland. One night in the Lobby, he said that Home Rule might be gained by Ireland, or any other reform; but the benefit would be

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Cork.<sup>2</sup> M.P. for Co. Cavan.



comparatively useless, so long as the great Drink-evil was untouched—or words to that effect. A few hours later he was struck down, and by morning he was gone. If the Irish patriots were patriotic enough to face the national enemy—Drink—as bravely and consistently as Mr. Biggar did all through his career, Ireland would now be a very different place from what it is. Not very long since one of the ablest Irish Members in the House told me that in Ireland the Liquor-Trade has more power than the Roman Catholic Church itself.

‘But the irritation and annoyance caused about this time by Parnell and Biggar systematically setting themselves to obstruct all business (“intelligent discussion” was what Mr. Biggar used to call it!) can be hardly conceived by any one who has not been a member of the House. On one occasion they kept the House sitting from four o’clock on Tuesday afternoon (July 31, 1877) until six o’clock on the Wednesday evening. These all-night sittings always seemed to me to be hideous and horrible performances—mere trials of brute force—seeing who has physical strength to sit up longest. But it is wonderful with what good humour, as a rule, the proceedings are carried on through all the weary hours. Of course there is not much sense in the speeches, and most of the audience are asleep, a good portion of the others half asleep, and about half a dozen or so of the militant minority alert and ready to jump up whenever an orator having said everything he can possibly think of, sinks down exhausted, and has his place supplied by a comrade, who recites virtually the same speech as his predecessor. Meanwhile the Speaker or Chairman tries to look awake, while the Clerks generally relapse into palpable slumber; the attendants at the door and in the Lobby nod and yawn, and, when daylight comes, its first rays fall through the windows on the miserable and ghastly spectacle of worn-out, used-up, and stale-mated legislators. I think “sickening” is not too strong a word for such performances. Yet I am not going to bring a railing

accusation against the Minority who bring them about. Representative Government appears to be the best sort of Government, and we must take it with its disadvantages as well as its advantages.

‘The “Bulgarian Atrocities” loomed larger and larger during this Session, and Mr. Gladstone made the subject his own, and eventually embodied his views on the proper manner in which they should be treated, in five Resolutions, of which he gave notice, and which caused immense heart-searchings in the ranks of the Liberal party, great pressure being put upon Mr. Gladstone to modify them. Certainly my own individual opinion is that these celebrated Resolutions were very “Gladstonian” in the bad sense of the word: that is, they vaguely and indistinctly pointed to something which it was not right or prudent to announce straightforwardly; that “something” being that England was prepared to go to war, to make Turkey rule Bulgaria decently. I do not wonder at many good Liberals shrinking from Resolutions of such a nature; but, on the other hand, the idea was that the Tory Party were leaning to the Turks, and the question unfortunately assumed the aspect of Turk against Russian; and most dispassionate observers came to the conclusion that the Russian Government was not as base as the Turkish Government; though I shall never forget having heard Cornwall Lewis say, in his solemn tones, in the House of Commons—“In all countries Government is the great engine of oppression.”’

‘The result of the internal ferment in the Lobbies and places of political resort was that Mr. Gladstone withdrew three of his Resolutions, and modified one of the remaining two. After several nights’ Debate and lots of speeches “full of sound and fury,” though I should be sorry to say “signifying nothing,” we divided, and a majority of 131 was obtained by the Government.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> May 7, 1877.

‘After this Gladstone’s anti-Turkish crusade may be said to have been mainly relegated to outside agitation. With regard to the withdrawing of his three Resolutions and retaining only two, he, after his manner, tried to show that he had not changed, etc., etc.; to which Northcote rather neatly replied with a parody of one of the verses in Wordsworth’s “We are seven” poem:—

“How ever can that be,” I said,

“If only two survive?”

The statesman merely shook his head,

And shouted: “There are five.”’

‘During this Session Chamberlain appeared as one of the Liquor-Legislators, and moved a Resolution approving of what is roughly called the “Gothenburg System” of dealing with the Trade. The underlying idea of all these Gothenburg schemes, or any modification of them, is that *private* profit should be eliminated from the business, and that, if it be carried on, it should be carried on by public bodies, or companies, who should devote anything beyond a certain maximum of profit to desirable public objects. Of course anything which restricts the volume of the Liquor-Traffic must do more or less good, but it is doubtful whether any very great results can be proved to have arisen from this mode of dealing with the Trade. Indeed, a few years since, the special commissioner of the *Times*, being sent to investigate matters, gave it as his opinion that Gothenburg was the most drunken place he had ever been in, except perhaps some town in Scotland. This evidence was not however to hand when Mr. Chamberlain moved his Resolution, which he treated with his accustomed ability.

‘I felt bound to speak, though I did so very reluctantly, as I had no faith at all in any of these nostrums for making a bad trade a source of good; and was yet unwilling to ever appear to object to anybody trying any scheme in which



they believed. But I think what I said annoyed Mr. Chamberlain considerably, for I explained that I did not believe in philanthropic publicans and patriotic pot-boys working out the benefits which he anticipated. He only got fifty-one votes for his Resolution, and we have not had the subject specially raised since in the House ; but outside it is ever and anon ventilated again ; for there is nothing on earth—sane, sensible, insane, or idiotic—which will not be advocated over and over again by somebody or other in order to keep the evil Legalized Liquor-Trade on its legs, somehow or other.

‘Cowen’s Licensing Boards Bill was also beaten on Second Reading by a majority of forty-eight. Here again, no doubt, Boards might, in many cases, be more likely to curtail the Traffic than Benches ; but why anybody should think that Liquor, sold under the authority of a Board instead of a Bench, would alter its harmful qualities, I do not know. A curious thing in connexion with the Liquor-Question was that in this Session (1877) we carried unanimously the Third Reading of Meldon’s <sup>1</sup> Irish Beer-House Bill—the scope of which was that it raised the rating of houses to which Beer-Licenses could be granted. Thus, at one fell swoop, hundreds of houses in Dublin, which had previously had licenses, could no longer obtain them. Yet no one spoke a word about Compensation. So true is it that Compensation is only for the rich—Commiseration for the poor.

‘I did not in this Session (1877) move the Permissive Bill, as I gave up the day which I had secured to the Irish Sunday Closers ; but when the day came, the Liquor-men obstructed—one of them speaking for two hours—and no advance was made. A few days afterwards at a morning sitting they managed to occupy five hours, and to stave off a Division. Thus the Bill was burked for the Session. Notwithstanding my giving up my Permissive Bill day in the hope of facilitating a measure which at the time there seemed to be a

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Co. Kildare.



possibility of carrying, it was always "the thing" for the newspapers to continue saying, that the Prohibitionists would have all or nothing, and thus stood in the way of any reform—the exact reverse being really the case.

'Towards the end of the Session, Mr. Ward Hunt, first Lord of the Admiralty, died, and W. H. Smith<sup>1</sup> succeeded him, which surprised people not a little; ~~no one, I fancy,~~ dreaming at that time, that within a few years he would become Leader of the House.

'Trevelyan got a good Division this year for his Resolution in favour of the Reduction of the County Franchise, being only beaten by fifty-six—the feature of the Debate being Lord Hartington's tardy adhesion to the measure. The way in which Trevelyan steadily pushed to the front this Franchise Question, in spite of all difficulties and objections, was excellent. I think O'Connell's words must have often occurred to him, as they have often occurred to me—"I go on saying the same thing over and over again till the echo of my words comes back to me from the mouths of my opponents."'

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. W. H. Smith (1825-1891), M.P. for Westminster.

## CHAPTER VI

## IMPERIALISM

THE Eastern Question was now nearing its acutest stage. In April 1877, Russia, ostensibly influenced by the desire to defend the Christian populations of the Turkish provinces against tyranny and misgovernment, declared war with Turkey; and the campaign proceeded, with varying fortunes, all through that year. Parliament met on the 17th of January, 1878, and Sir Stafford Northcote, Chancellor of the Exchequer, gave notice of his intention to ask for a Supplementary Estimate of Six Millions sterling towards increasing the armaments of the country. Speaking at Oxford on the 30th of January, Gladstone declared that this demand was the most indefensible proposition that had, in his time, ever been submitted to Parliament, and avowed that for the last year and a half his main object in life had been to 'counterwork the purposes of Lord Beaconsfield.' Those purposes included, according to common belief, an intention to intervene on behalf of Turkey in the war now raging between her and Russia; and the principal object which all earnest Liberals set before themselves in the Session of 1878 was the frustration of that design.

'I find that in summing up the next Session (1878) I describe it as "a miserable Session, jingoism triumphant and leading to mad and mischievous expenditure. Tories jubilant and Liberals cowed." I seem to have got into a way of calling these Sessions "miserable," and indeed when most of the time of a national assembly is taken up in discussing

wars and rumours of war, even if it be necessary to do so, it does seem to me that the state of things is "miserable." And at the time I am writing this (1901) the lust of blood seems to hold sway more powerfully than ever, and especially over what are called the civilized nations of the world. I remember a line of some poet, where we are called "the reasoning sons of men"; but we seem to reason to very little purpose when we think it necessary to spend such a large portion of our little span on earth in devising schemes for sending one another out of it a little sooner than we should go in the ordinary course of nature. It is bewildering and incomprehensible. If the account, however, of the origin of the human race be true, one should not perhaps be surprised at what they are now. Adam appears to have been a hopeless character. Eve was a mean mischief-maker, who made a confidant of the devil. Cain, their eldest son, was a murderer; and even Noah, who was the best of their later descendants, took to drinking. With such a start and with such bringing up, humanity must have had a bad chance. Yet to those who believe in "Progress," it is depressing to find that we seem to be little better than our first parents.

'These gloomy strictures are drawn from me in looking back on how so much of this Session (1878) was occupied in discussing the interminable Eastern Question. Why we, living on an Island in the West—"Little England," I call it—should think that we can satisfactorily manage the affairs of the East I know not. When we tried to do so in the middle of the last century, the result was the Crimean War—probably until the South African War (raging while I write) the most useless sacrifice of men and money. But that war seems to have taught us little, and here is "the pity of it"—that experience seems to be lost on "the reasoning sons of men," and that, though History is said to be Philosophy teaching by example, her lessons seem to be thrown away on the mass of mankind. Be that as it may, we were now (1878)

all full of the Eastern Question—none of us understanding it, but all able to explain it to each other.

‘The chance of our going to war again with Russia delighted the “Man in the Street,” who, when he got out of the street, and into the Music-Hall, used to join with patriotic ardour in the chorus of a popular war-song, which ran

‘We don’t want to fight, but by Jingo if we do,  
We’ve got the ships, we’ve got the men, we’ve got the money too.

‘A friend of mine parodied them at the time with

‘We don’t want to fight, but by Jingo if we do,  
We’ll get a shilling income-tax, and a thundering licking too.’<sup>1</sup>

‘It was about this time that—probably from the popularity of the song which I have mentioned—the name Jingo was first applied to the war-party. John Morley, when asked to define a Jingo, said he “could not define him, but he knew him when he saw him.” The word has now been regularized, and is constantly used by writers and speakers, for it evidently filled a gap. Where John Morley “fears to tread,” I shrink from “rushing in,” but if I *had* to define a Jingo, I should call him an irresponsible, impulsive, ignorant shouter for war. But perhaps a sentence from Lord Salisbury would be better, where he talked of the people who “wanted to fight everybody and take everything.” There has been some controversy as to who coined the word, but I am pretty sure that it was Mr. G. J. Holyoake<sup>2</sup> who first gave it currency, when writing to the newspapers.

‘Well, these Jingo in the year 1878 got more and more excited as the war between Russia and Turkey proceeded,

<sup>1</sup> *The Spectator* wrote with reference to the Government’s action in bringing native troops from India to Malta:

We don’t want to fight, but by Jingo, if we do,  
We won’t go to the front ourselves—we’ll send the mild Hindoo.

<sup>2</sup> G. J. Holyoake (1817–1906), Secularist and Co-operator.



and as gradually it became clear that Russia was going to have the best of it.

‘The Government kept on, what I may call “talking Turkish,” and towards the end of January, Northcote told the House that the fleet had been sent to the Dardanelles, whereat the Tories cheered lustily ; but in the next sentence he said it had been recalled, whereat the Liberals cheered loudly, and a day or two afterwards appeared the following lines :—

‘When the Government ordered the Fleet to the Straits  
They surely encountered the hardest of fates,  
For the order, once given, at once was recalled,  
And the Russians were not in the slightest appalled.  
And everyone says, who has heard the Debates,  
It’s the Cabinet now, not the Fleet, that’s “in straits.”

‘All this public and Parliamentary excitement, this moving of fleets, making of speeches, and singing of songs, arose, I believe, from the idea that the Russians would take possession of Constantinople. One day I said in conversation with Mr. Cowen (whose ruling passion almost was his detestation of the Russian Government) that I could not see what harm there would be to the world at large in Russia taking Constantinople. I shall never forget the look of mingled fury and contempt which he gave me. I believe he thought I was little better than an idiot to have such an idea. But years have not altered my opinion, and I would not give the bones of one British soldier to help the Turks in keeping Russia out of Constantinople. However, there is little doubt that the English people at the time would have looked on the Russian occupation of Constantinople as a most dreadful thing, and probably a war to prevent it would have been most popular ; and one night we had a most exciting scene in connexion with the matter. The Russo-Turkish War was drawing to an end, and the alarm was great about what terms Russia would exact. Forster had given notice of a motion—

I forget its exact bearing as I write—but it was in a peaceful direction. But before he brought it on, Northcote announced that news had come, that the Russians were marching on Constantinople, which put everyone into a fever of excitement and anxiety, so great that Forster announced he should withdraw his motion. Shortly afterwards Northcote got up and said the news was wrong, and they were not marching on Constantinople, adding, “something has gone wrong with the wires,” on which an Irish Member sitting next to me, said, “Something has gone wrong with the liars.”

‘The great debate on Foreign Policy arose on a vote of credit for 6,000,000*l.* which Government said was necessary. I have always thought, that, when two great nations, like Russia and Turkey, fight, we are in less danger than usual, as at any rate two nations have their hands full, and cannot attack us; which we are told to believe all nations wish or intend to do some time or other. But very few politicians seem to hold my view, so, even many Liberals were quite ready to support this vote of 6,000,000*l.* and when, after several nights’ debate, the Division came, we could only muster 124 votes against 329 for the Government. Hartington, Forster, and Goschen “walked out,” but Gladstone was with us; and during the Debate, and during all the Eastern “crisis,” as it was called, had made some of his magnificent speeches against the Government policy. I hardly ever heard Mr. Gladstone make one of his “set speeches,” without thinking, as he sat down, “That certainly is the best speech which I have ever heard him make.” Take him *all round*, and compare him with the other great speakers I have heard—and many of them were really “great”—it is the case over again of “Eclipse first, and the rest nowhere.”<sup>1</sup>

‘In all these Eastern debates, I, ever and anon, did my little

<sup>1</sup> Lawson told me that he thought Gladstone’s Speech on the Taxation of Charities in 1863 was his most wonderful performance.—G. W. E. R.

best to counteract the War “Scare,” by preventing Resolutions being withdrawn, insisting on Divisions, and generally making myself a nuisance to the “Respectables” of our Party, *i.e.* those who profess Liberal principles in ordinary times, but who always find some reason for not acting on them, when they would be of any use. This Liberalism always reminds me of an umbrella, which a man might carry about with him in fine weather, but which would not go up when the rain came on.

‘However, somehow or other, we worried through the Eastern crisis without war, and John Bull had his favourite excitement of a “scare,” without a catastrophe; and before the Session ended, Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury went to Berlin, and in conference with the other Powers, managed to make the Peace which, when concluded, was rather worse than it would have been without their interference. They returned home in a blaze of triumph, and Lord Beaconsfield declared that he had brought back “Peace with Honour.” There was a grand dinner in the Knightsbridge Riding-School to entertain Disraeli and these wonderful Peace-makers. I stood a good while in an immense crowd to see these notabilities arrive. Suddenly there was a swaying and a shouting in the crowd and we thought the great ones were at hand, but it turned out to be three sweeps in a soot-cart, who had somehow got through the crowd. This little thing made me think a bit, but my thoughts need not be detailed.

‘But, curiously enough, soon after I was so fortunate as to be within a few feet of Lord Beaconsfield himself, when he made his great speech in the House of Lords.<sup>1</sup> This may sound strange, but it was on this wise. One of the attendants let me into the vault, or cellar, or lower story, or whatever it is called in the House of Lords; and as the floor is perforated and I stood exactly below Lord Beacons-

<sup>1</sup> July 18, 1878: ‘In the House of Lords, amid a crowded and brilliant gathering, Lord Beaconsfield makes a statement regarding the Berlin Treaty.’—*Annals of our Time*.

field, I could hear every word he said distinctly. This somewhat Guy Fawkes-like proceeding was rather interesting, and though I am never likely to take part in a Debate on the floor of the House of Lords, it was something to have participated in the proceedings *under* the floor.

‘Though we escaped war with Russia this year, we managed to get into an Afghan war in the Autumn—through the grossest mismanagement, to say the very least of it—and we were called together in December (1878) to provide for it. Whitbread<sup>1</sup> admirably moved a Vote of Censure for this war, but of course we were well beaten by a majority of 101. It may be laid down as a rule that all wars are popular in England. The longer I live the more incomprehensible does it appear to me, how people who call themselves Christians can take a pride and pleasure in war, which the *Times* newspaper once said was nothing more than “ornamental murder.” Cain, the first murderer, seems to have been rather ashamed of himself, but we, whenever we get into a war anywhere, “glory in our shame.” I remember that when there was a Division in the House of Lords on the same Afghan war, many of the Bishops voted for it. It happened that, just at this time, the Bishopric of Durham was vacant, and ill-disposed persons said, that one of the Bishops who voted for the war and for the Government had his eye on it, wishing for the preferment. However, this particular Bishop did not get it, whereupon there appeared some lines, beginning—

‘ You’ve made a mistake in your atlas, my man,  
You can’t get to Durham through Afghanistan.

It is sad that these venerable ecclesiastics, through being bound to attend to their duties in the House of Lords, should be liable to become the subject of ribald rhymes, such as the above.

‘The best thing which we did in this Session (1878) was to

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Bedford.



pass the Irish Sunday Closing Bill. Much of the credit of this was due to the energy and persistency of Mr. T. W. Russell, who, acting for the Irish Temperance Party, and aided by two or three *real* Irish patriots, did what is called the Lobby work, in connexion with the Bill. He afterwards became himself a Member of Parliament,<sup>1</sup> and at the time I am writing this (1901) is, with tremendous energy, agitating for what he considers sound Law for Irish Land, just as he did in this Session, for sound Law in relation to Irish Liquor. The O'Connor Don<sup>2</sup> led inside the House in this desperate fight, which kept us up all night more than once, and which was only won with the greatest difficulty against the Liquor-Ring, who fought the measure foot by foot, and inch by inch. The Government were, for very shame's sake, obliged to help, and give us facilities more or less, though this was done under compulsion. They managed to save for the Ring five of the largest Irish towns, Dublin, Belfast, Cork, Limerick, and Waterford, and these were exempted from the operation of the Bill, and were called the five "Cities of Refuge." The O'Connor Don was reluctantly obliged to agree to this, as otherwise the Government would have stopped the Bill. Yet these were the places where probably the Bill was most needed. What heart can conceive, what tongue can tell, what pen can write, the evils and miseries which the Liquor-Ring have inflicted on the United Kingdom, and which it is still inflicting on them, and will continue to inflict, until the nation rises up and bids them cease their "desolating" trade.

'There is a well-known story of an American, who, being in Dublin, was shown the Cathedral, restored by the munificence of an eminent brewer. Then he was shown the beautiful schools which the brewer had built; and lastly he was taken to the brewery, where all the money was made. Whereupon he remarked: "This appears to be a most remarkable man;

<sup>1</sup> For South Tyrone.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for Co. Roscommon

he seems to run Education, Salvation, and Damnation"; which is exactly what the nation itself does, for none of these Brewing and Drink-selling operations can be carried on without its direct sanction.

'I was once in one of the Cities of Refuge, Cork, and what struck me most was a statue of Father Mathew, the great Temperance Advocate, in one of the principal squares, flanked by a flaring whiskey-shop on each of three of the corners of the square. There is something in the Bible about building the tombs of the prophets, and paying no regard to their precepts. But can anything be more ludicrously and pitifully anomalous than the statue of this great and good man, who described the Liquor-Traffic as a "monster gorged with human gore," set up in the very midst of places licensed for carrying on that traffic. I know of nothing more instructive for anyone who takes the trouble to think, than the sight of such a statue in such a place. I suppose the statue and the drink-shops remain as I saw them in those days.

'As probably I shall not have occasion to write much more about Irish Sunday Closing, I may just add that it proved a great success, and when the "Liquor-Ring" obtained a Select Committee to enquire into its working, in hopes of damaging it, the case was that of Balaam over again, and the Committee blessed what it was hoped they would curse.

'An Irishman, soon after the Act came into operation, was asked how it worked in his village. He said it was excellent, and the place was now so quiet on Sunday that it was "as if there was a corpse in every house." There is nobody like an Irishman for depicting things in a picturesque manner.

'It was during this year, 1878, that J. B. Gough, the famous Temperance Orator, paid another visit to England. When one thinks of the efforts that such men as he and Father Mathew have made for "soberizing" the nation, and how unlikely it is that we shall ever have men of more eloquence and power than they were, one sees that the only hope for permanent

reform is in getting the Law to cease being the great cause of temptation to drinking. Without an alteration in this direction, Paul may plant and Apollos water with comparatively indifferent results.

‘I did not hear Gough speak often, and I fancy he was not as effective as he used to be in former days. One thing which he said I remember thinking good. He was combating the idea that alcoholic drinks give strength, and he said “If you sit down on a wasps’ nest, it will be stimulating but not strengthening.” That reminds me of a story of Sir Andrew Clark, which possibly may not be true, but is *ben trovato*. It is said that, when he recommended a patient to drink wine, the latter expressed some surprise, saying he thought Sir A. Clark was a Temperance Doctor, to which Sir A. Clark replied: “Oh, wine does sometimes help you to get through work; for instance, I have often twenty letters to answer after dinner, and a pint of champagne is a great help.” “Indeed,” said the patient, “does a pint of champagne really help you to answer the twenty letters?” “No! No!” said Sir Andrew, “but when I’ve had a pint of champagne, I don’t care a rap whether I answer them or not!”

‘The Session of 1879 was the last Session for the strong Tory Government, which came into power in 1874, and, like all Sessions which are understood to be the last of a Parliament, was pretty well utilized by Members “playing to the Gallery,” which means, doing what they could to exhibit their ability, statesmanship, and patriotism in as pleasing and powerful a light as possible to their respective constituencies. But there was a good deal of interesting work in this (1879) Session. We had a good deal of discussion on the Zulu War, which gave us a foretaste of the bloody South African drama, which was destined in future years to bring so much disaster and disgrace on England.

‘Dilke very ably expounded the way in which the War had been brought about. He adduced evidence to show that the

original trouble came from some Zulu stealing a pipe and a pocket-handkerchief. My conclusion about the making of wars is that, when it is desired that they should be made, *any* pretext is sufficient, but when it is desired that they should not be made, no provocation is sufficient. Bright was very good on this point once, when he said people talked of a war "breaking out" as they would of the smallpox breaking out, when really they are the result of men's own folly and wickedness. One thinks of this at the time when I am writing (1901) when the awful war in South Africa, which was concocted between them by Mr. Kruger and Mr. Chamberlain, is talked of as having been "inevitable." This "inevitable" explanation will, of course, cover pleasantly every wickedness that was ever committed. I suppose those professing Churchmen who employ it are in their hearts Mahommedans—believers in "Kismet." Dilke's condemnation of the war was defeated by a majority of sixty, which, in such a House, at such a time, and on such a question, was not bad.

'I was rather interested this Session (1879) in what took place in a debate on Trevelyan's annual Motion in favour of reducing the County Franchise. Courtney<sup>1</sup> spoke in the Debate, and declined to support the Motion, as it did not deal with the representation of minorities. But three days later he moved a Resolution in favour of enfranchising women, even without the minority matter being first attended to. How hard is it for even the most honest and ablest of men (and Courtney is one of them) always to keep an "even keel" in political voyages.

'My notion is, that in the House of Commons one should take every bit of reform which one can get, as an instalment even, though it may not be a settlement of sound policy. Trevelyan's County voters were beaten by sixty-five, and Courtney's women by 114—the Political Woman being still

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. L. H. Courtney, M.P. for Liskeard. Created Lord Courtney of Penwith 1906.



looked upon with more alarm than the Drunken Brick-layer.

‘Perhaps the most interesting and exciting debates in this Session were those on Flogging in the Army. There used to be an old House of Commons story about Mr. Merry, at one time Member for Falkirk. He was a prominent racing man, but not what would be called a skilled politician. His constituents, after the manner of Scotchmen, delighted in asking him questions on the Hustings—heckling it is called—and trying to puzzle him. On one occasion, after he had been pestered for a long time, some wag asked what was Mr. Merry’s opinion of the Decalogue. Never having heard of the Decalogue, he asked a supporter by his side: “What’s that?” “Flogging in the Army,” his friend replied. “Oh,” said Mr. Merry to the interrogator, “I’ve always voted steadily against that.”

‘But in these debates we did not find the Liberal Party vote so steadily against Flogging in the Army as we could have wished. But a most determined attack was made on it, mainly by Parnell and the Irishmen, aided and abetted brilliantly by Mr. Chamberlain, who fought the question boldly and pertinaciously. It was in one of these discussions that, when Lord Hartington refused to go as far as we wished him against the flogging business, Mr. Chamberlain called him the “late leader” of the Liberal Party. This shows that things were getting pretty warm, and indeed so strong was the feeling against flogging that, before we got to the end of our discussions, Hartington himself was induced to move a Resolution virtually against the thing altogether. Of course he was beaten amid loud and long cheering from the Tories, the majority against him being 106.

‘I imagine that very few people in the present day know, either from reading or hearing, what flogging in the army really was. It was simply cutting men up alive. From the accounts given in these debates, and from what I have read,

I believe that few things more horrible, even in this world of horrors, have ever been witnessed than the flogging of a soldier. Not unfrequently (before the number of lashes were reduced) men used to die from the punishment. We had an exhibition, near the cloak-room in the House of Commons, of these instruments of torture—sickening enough to behold. Yet here were men in the House of Commons, some Liberals as well as Tories, who would vote for continuation of this awful brutality. And many of these very men would probably subscribe to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, or attend Anti-Vivisection Meetings. However, the scandal is done with now, thanks very much to Mr. Chamberlain, and Parnell and his Irishmen; and, as usual, all the prophecies of its being impossible to preserve discipline in the army without it have been disproved.

‘Towards the end of July, the news was given to us in the House one afternoon that Lord Chelmsford had gained a great victory over the Zulus and that 800 of them had been killed, while we had only lost ten men. The announcement of this massacre was hailed with tremendous cheering, as any slaughter of savages by Christians generally is, especially if they are defending their own country.

‘During this Session (1879) Mr. Butt<sup>1</sup> died. He was one of the most powerful speakers I have often heard, and his speeches in favour of Home Rule were very fine. If he had had moral weight, he would have been a great Parliamentary figure. With his departure, the reign of Parnell, who instigated and directed, organized and systematized, Irish obstruction, had no longer any check, and was destined to produce most remarkable results.

‘In this Session, I varied my attack on the Drink-Trade by proposing a Resolution instead of bringing in a Bill. The words of my Resolution were copied from a recommendation of a Committee of the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury,

<sup>1</sup> Isaac Butt (1813–1879), M.P. for Limerick.

to the effect that inhabitants of districts, being the persons most interested in the licensing of Public Houses, should themselves have the power of stopping such licensing, if they objected to having the Trade forced upon them—or words to that effect. One would have thought that such a Resolution would have appealed to the Church and the Clergy ; but time proved that, as a rule, they had very little affection for it ; and the Clergy have been, and still are (1901) the staunchest supporters of the Tory Party—the Tory Party being the staunchest supporters of the privileges of the publicans against the rights of the public.

‘But my Resolution found a certain amount of favour among the regular and orthodox politicians on the Liberal side. Some of them used to explain how it was by their counsel that I had adopted the attack by Resolution in lieu of by Bill. The real fact was that it had suddenly occurred to me that a Resolution was equivalent to a Second Reading of a Local Veto Bill ; for a Second Reading is, properly considered, merely the endorsement of the principle of a measure. When I brought in a Bill, the “ wise men ” used to say that my principle was right, but that there were all sorts of objections to my details. “ All right,” I said, “ then here you are without any details ; those you can fill up at your pleasure, when you have endorsed the principle.” This undoubtedly took the “ wise men ” rather aback, and they made beautiful and elaborate speeches on the Resolution, when it came on, explaining that it was not the Permissive Bill ; that they still held the same views about it ; that the Resolution had all sorts of meanings ; that it might be moulded into all sorts of things ; and generally adopting every Parliamentary manœuvre to show how consistent, practical, and moderate they were, and not to appear too antagonistic to the mighty Liquor-Power outside.

‘All this suited me well enough. I knew that the Resolution meant exactly what it said, and so I declared in the House. In the end, though I did not get exactly a “ square ” division

on the Resolution, I was virtually only beaten by 88 ; which, in a House generally supposed to have been elected to defend "the National Church and the National Beverage," was not bad.

'During the recess of 1879, great agitation was carried on against the Foreign Policy of the Government—an agitation which took its line from Mr. Gladstone's Midlothian Campaign; which Lord Beaconsfield picturesquely called "a Pilgrimage of Passion," but which was really the most remarkable political campaign ever carried through by the tremendous energy and eloquence of one man. The Tories did not perhaps quite realize the effect which Mr. Gladstone had produced, and they were rather encouraged by a bye-election in Southwark, then considered to be rather a Radical stronghold, where the present Sir Edward Clarke was returned as the Government Candidate by a fair majority on Feb. 14, 1880. So it came to pass that, suddenly on March 8, Northcote announced to the House that Parliament was to be dissolved.'

The Dissolution took place on the 24th March, 1880. One and only one question was submitted to the Electors—'Do you approve or condemn Lord Beaconsfield's foreign policy?' The answer was given at Easter 1880, when the Prime Minister and his colleagues received the most emphatic condemnation which, down to that time, had ever been bestowed on an English Government, and the Liberals were returned in an overwhelming majority over Tories and Home Rulers combined.



## CHAPTER VII

## GLADSTONIANISM

' A WONDERFUL General Election was that of 1880. Mr. Gladstone carried all before him, and when Lord Beaconsfield saw the result, he and his Government resigned, and Mr. Gladstone formed a Government. In Carlisle, Mr. Ferguson and I retained our seats by majorities of seven or eight hundred; and, marvellous to relate, we returned Mr. David Ainsworth at the head of the Poll for West Cumberland, a Constituency that had never had a Liberal Member since it became a Constituency. How or why we managed to get the seat there puzzles me, even to this day; but I looked upon it at the time as a tremendous triumph, full of hope for the future. I remember a feeble joke which amused our Liberals a little bit at the time. During the contest I went about a good deal with Mr. Ainsworth, doing what I could for him; whereupon my friend Mr. Percy Wyndham, one of the Tory Candidates, compared Mr. Ainsworth to a bear being led about by me. So, when Mr. Ainsworth had won, I said to the cheering electors that "the Bear was now at the top of the Poll." But we lost a seat in East Cumberland, where Sir Richard Musgrave beat Mr. George Howard (the present Lord Carlisle).

' My electioneering experience in Cumberland and elsewhere leads me to the conclusion that no creature which God has created is so difficult to understand as the British elector. You never can safely predict what he will do under any circumstances. I was once in company with

M. Clémenceau, the French statesman, when he was in England ; and wanting to find out something about French politics, I asked : " What does the French elector want ? " To which he replied : " One French elector wants to beat the other one." But, if this be the leading idea in England, it does not, however, explain the curious way in which they go round, *apparently* without rhyme or reason. On this occasion Mr. George Howard, naturally disconcerted at his defeat—being a sound Liberal—attributed it, in a speech after the Poll, partly to the efforts against him of the " Squireens " ; and this rather irritated the electors, who did not understand what squireens were ; and whenever a word is not understood it is thought to be objectionable.

'Gladstone in his new Government took Sir William Harcourt for his Home Secretary, necessitating the latter's going down to Oxford for re-election. Here he was opposed by Hall, the great local brewer, and defeated. In speaking after his defeat, he attributed it to " solid and liquid arguments"—the latter, I should think, being far the most effective. Thackeray once stood for Oxford, but having expressed himself in favour of opening museums on Sunday, or something of a pro-people and anti-priest nature, he was opposed by the clergy along with their natural allies the publicans, and beaten. He attributed his defeat to " the Bigots and the Spigots."

'Plimsoll resigned his seat at Derby, and there Harcourt was elected.

'The various phases of Harcourt's relations with the Liquor-power are of a very interesting nature. At one time, to the delight of the publicans, he dubbed restrictive measures as " grandmotherly legislation," and used to make speeches of that sort at a gathering in Oxford of persons called, if I remember rightly, " Antediluvian Buffaloes." Then he got an idea of what these publicans were, when their " liquid arguments " defeated him at this election. Then, when he

became Home Secretary, he discovered that most of the crime of this country begins, continues, and ends in Drink; and finally he came round boldly and grandly on the side of the People against the Liquor-Ring, and introduced the Local Veto Bill, which, though not carried at the time I write (1901), has endeared him to all who believe in honest, Liberal, and humane legislation.

‘In this Session (1880) the Bradlaugh business began. Mr. Bradlaugh was an able Atheist, as well as a most capable politician. Northampton sent him and Mr. Labouchere to Parliament, and Mr. Bradlaugh made objection at first to taking the usual oath, but ultimately was ready and anxious to do so. But Speaker Brand declined to allow him to do so, and was thus, in my opinion, the cause of all the subsequent trouble. It was no business of the Speaker’s to enquire into a Member’s opinion on religious matters. If Bradlaugh desired to take the oath, he had as much right to do so as any other Member. As he was not allowed, he raised all kinds of scenes. On one occasion he was allowed to plead his cause at the Bar, and made a wonderfully fine speech. On another occasion he attempted to swear himself in; and yet again he, on one occasion, resisted the order to turn him out, and I saw him struggling violently in the Lobby, his coat being torn, while the attendants hurled him out of the precincts.

‘All this was “nuts” for the Tories, and for months and months Bradlaugh was the most valuable portion of their stock-in-trade. The whole thing in its main features was very much on the lines of the Wilkes business of generations before. Gladstone was very good all through this unpleasant controversy, maintaining the rights of the Constituencies to return whom they pleased, and condemning as utterly wrong the attempt to enquire into the religious views of those who were elected. I forget how many years it was before it was settled, but of course, ultimately, the popular side won, and

Northampton was allowed to have the representative whom it desired.<sup>1</sup> One day in these times, a lady in the Lobby, wishing to speak to Mr. Labouchere and seeing him approach, said interrogatively: "The Member for Northampton?" "The Christian Member"! replied Mr. Labouchere, with a polite bow.

'In the height of this Bradlaugh business, Mr. Collins—known in the House as "Tom Collins," was returned at a bye-election.<sup>2</sup> He was a very orthodox High Churchman; but when he came up to take the oath, I made objection, inasmuch as his religious opinions had not been enquired into. Naturally my objection was set aside by the Speaker, but, logically, it was as fitting to enquire into the religion of Tom Collins as of Charles Bradlaugh. Collins told me that for years afterwards people kept writing to him to ask whether he was an Atheist! Verily, your Englishman is a matter-of-fact being. It is all very well to say that a Scotchman cannot see a joke, but he is, I think, quicker at it than an Englishman.

'Harcourt during this Session passed the Hares and Rabbits Bill, which substantially put these animals into the power of the tenants instead of the landlords. His dealing thus with these sacred animals greatly infuriated against him all the orthodox old Tory squires, but I believe that the Anti-Game Law agitation would not have so completely died out as I have mentioned above, had it not been for the passing of this Bill. I remember in one of the Debates on some other Game Bill once in the House there was a discussion about the protection of the eggs of partridges and pheasants, and one of the squires to whom I have alluded suggested that the eggs of hares should be included in the Bill! This was a case of "zeal without knowledge."

'In this Session (1880) I had hopes that, with a new and

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Bradlaugh took his seat in January 1886.

<sup>2</sup> For Knaresborough.



strongly Liberal House of Commons, I should get a Majority against the motion for adjourning on the Derby Day. My previous operations in that line had resulted in the motion not being now moved by a Member of the Government, but being left in the hands of a private Member. This rather reminded me of a very good clergyman who told me that he hated the Athanasian Creed. "What," I said, "do you do on the days when it is appointed to be read?" "Make the Curate read it," he replied. However, on this occasion, Mr. Richard Power—an amusing Irish Member<sup>1</sup>—represented the Curate, and in spite of my opposition obtained a majority of about two to one for the adjournment. A French newspaper described my speech, on the same motion in 1875, as follows—"Cette année, cependant, un membre révolutionnaire, Sir W. Lawson, a osé demander, non pas que ses collègues n'allassent pas au Derby, mais seulement que les sages de l'Assemblée ne fussent pas tenus de prendre congé. Son discours, très humoristique, plein d'une ironie à demi courtoise, à demi guoguenarde" (I do not know the proper translation of this last word, but let it stand, though it may be something very damaging!) "a eu un grand succès, mais n'a pas empêché l'ajournement d'être voté." These remarks brought to my mind what the *Times* once said about my style of speaking, describing it as my "one strain of jovial cynicism." I incline to think that this was rather a good criticism. I do not see why anyone who, in easy circumstances, possesses a good home, good friends, and good digestion, should not be jovial. But, whenever I made a speech I saw in the background the myriads of men and women who were not in those pleasant circumstances, and felt that all one said should more or less bear upon what is called the "Condition of the People," believing that the words in one of Disraeli's novels are true: "The one duty of politics is to provide for the social welfare of the people." I suppose

<sup>1</sup> For Waterford.

it was this idea pressing upon me, coupled with the impression of how little political men really kept this point in view, that brought about what the Tories called my "cynicism."

'The leader-writers in our newspapers I always look on as marvels of shrewdness and integrity, and much can you pick up from their writings. But one need not be a slave to their judgments. Once when I had made one of my anti-Derby speeches, I looked through the leading London newspapers to see what they had made of the Debate. One began: "Sir Wilfrid Lawson made the mistake of dealing with this matter too seriously." I then turned to another, and found that its leading article began with: "Sir Wilfrid Lawson made the mistake of dealing with this matter too lightly." But I do not remember finding one which said I had done it neither too seriously nor too lightly. So that, on the whole, the criticisms were wholesome.

'A little incident occurred during this Session (1880) to which I look back with some interest. The new Parliament was virtually Gladstone's Parliament, for the Liberal majority had been secured mainly through his marvellous oratorical efforts in condemnation of the Foreign Policy of the Government. Among other things, he had strongly denounced the doings of Sir Bartle Frere in Africa, which ultimately resulted in the first annexation of the Transvaal. One naturally expected that when he got into power he would at once deal firmly with Sir Bartle Frere, but, instead of this, it soon became evident that the new Government were going virtually to condone his doings. Whereupon, one afternoon, I gave notice that I should move an address for his recall. A few minutes afterwards I met Mr. Bright in the cloak-room and he "went for me" in a most energetic way, reproaching me for trying to upset the Government, and using pretty strong language to me. I replied little or nothing: first, because I knew I was right; and secondly, because I had far too great a regard and affection for Mr. Bright to enter

into any personal controversy with him. So we both went our ways, but the next morning I got a note from Mr. Bright saying that he was sorry he had been so violent over the matter the day before. I much value that note, showing as it did both the kindness and the justice which were prominent qualities in Mr. Bright. As the note, also, shows the different views which a Minister and an independent Member take of questions in which both hold much the same views in principle, when action has to be taken, I transcribe a portion of Mr. Bright's note, which is also interesting in connexion with the South African Question, which has since those days had such tragic developments.

‘Mr. Bright wrote, after excusing his heat—

“If it were an enemy, I could have borne it—but for a friend to break out into opposition to the Government of his own making, only two days after its appearance in the House, is a measure of Party tactics, I fancy, wholly without previous example. If no particle of confidence is to be placed in a Government, if any accidental difference on a question in which no great principle is involved is to justify an immediate attempt to destroy it, we may bid farewell to any permanent Liberal Administration in this country, and must become as Italy now is, or suffer the blessings of another long Conservative reign.” Then, after saying that he thinks Mr. Gladstone might be trusted in the matter, he goes on—“It *may* be better for the country and for the colony to do what the Government is doing than to gratify our anxiety to punish Frere, and the Government is only earnest on behalf of the country and the colony.”

‘Politicians will, I think, find some food for thought in this letter. I feel inclined to comment on it, but shall content myself with saying how much the remark about “punishing Sir Bartle Frere” brings to my mind the situation years afterwards, when we declined to punish Mr. Rhodes for conspiring to invade a friendly country in time of peace, a



course which led up to the great Boer War with its unspeakable horrors and disgrace.'

At this point I may conveniently introduce Lawson's account of his parliamentary efforts for Local Veto in the two Sessions of 1880. In the earlier Session, which began on the 5th of February, and ended on the 24th of March, he moved a Resolution in support of his favourite policy, which was defeated by 114 votes. The second Session of the year—the first of the new Parliament—was opened on the 29th of April.

'I brought my Resolution on again on the 18th of June, when Gladstone made a long speech, criticizing in his wonderful way the Resolution, but fully admitting the evil and the popular demand for reform, and, though unable to vote for my Resolution, yet declaring that a reform of the Licensing Laws was part of the work and mission of the present Parliament. Alas! how few Parliaments perform their work or accomplish their mission.

'The bulk of the Debate was much on the usual lines. Dr. Johnson used, it is said, to report the Debates in Parliament pretty much out of his own head and fancy—one of the few rather immoral doings of that glorious old man. I think that I could any day pretty nearly report beforehand what would be said in the House of Commons, whenever any measure attacking the Drink-Traffic comes up. The Mover begins by reading a lot of statistics showing what drink does, and appeals for something being done to check those evils. The Seconder says ditto. Then up gets a Liquor-man, who begins by calling God to witness that no one hates drunkenness so much as he does and that he would support any measure really calculated to check it, but that this one (whatever it is) would not do so. Then he probably says, with the air of a sage, "You can't make men sober by Act of Parliament"; whereat there is a slight burst of cheering, though the axiom strikes at the root of the 300 Laws which we have passed regulating



the Liquor-Traffic, which ought all to be repealed if the axiom be true. Then somebody gets up, who has been in a Prohibition State in America, where he declares that in some town he followed a man down a dark street, was taken into a back room, with the window barred and the door shut, and a pass-word demanded of him, and that he then got a glass of whiskey. This is considered to prove beyond a doubt that "prohibition does not prohibit," and is cheered accordingly; no one seeming to reflect that the Law must be tolerably operative, if it requires such a vast amount of ingenuity to break through its meshes. Then we have the prudent, practical, statesmanlike man, the "Notwithstanding—At the same time—Nevertheless—On the other hand" man, whom the House loves. He balances on the slack-rope for twenty minutes or so, and gets down without letting anyone understand what he will do. But the great card of all is for someone to say emphatically, "There is intemperance in speech as well as in drinking." This is looked upon as the very acme of wisdom, although I do not know how anyone is able very much to exaggerate the evils of intemperance. Then there is one favourite statement regularly trotted out in a Drink-Debate. Someone is sure to say: "Lord Robert Grosvenor, years ago, tried to pass a Bill stopping the sale of drink on Sundays, and it caused a riot in Hyde Park." Cheers again. The fact is that the Bill in question had a clause specially stating that nothing in the Bill should interfere in any way with the Sale of Drink. Nevertheless the statement is made in every Drink-Debate, and will probably continue to be made so long as Drink-Debates continue—so true is it, as Mr. Moody once said, that "a lie will get half round the world before Truth has finished putting on his boots."

'However, on this occasion, after all this usual talk, I was fortunate enough to carry my Resolution by a majority of twenty-six. I well remember a Member, as I was going out of the door, very kindly congratulating me on the victory, and

my saying to him, in thanking him, that I knew this was only the beginning of the fight. I was right there, at any rate.'

The year 1881 dawned in gloom. Our meddlesome policy in South Africa involved us in the disasters of Laing's Nek and Majuba Hill. Ireland showed a ghastly record of murder and outrage. An exasperating but inoperative Coercion Act was forced through the House, amid scenes of unprecedented obstruction and disorder; and the energies of Parliament were distracted from long-promised reforms to a number of extraneous subjects in which the English electorate took not the faintest interest. Where, nine months before, everything had been triumph, elation, and rejoicing, now there was nothing but disappointment, disillusion, and that hope deferred which maketh the heart sick. But Lawson could never be depressed, and even from the Irish Land Bill he seems to have snatched a fearful joy.

'The Session of 1881 was very interesting, as much of it was occupied by the discussion and passing of Mr. Gladstone's Irish Land Bill. Of course the Tories fought it in Committee with ~~wearisome~~ persistency, but, as there had been a majority of 174 for its Second Reading, we had sufficient moral force to get it through all the dangers of Committee. But before we took up the Irish Land Bill we had to pass coercive legislation which was furiously opposed by the Irishmen. All sorts of scenes kept arising—tumults, disorders, and many suspensions of Members.

'Sir Stafford Northcote once said that he had been told the only way to govern Ireland was with a big stick and a full purse. This might be freely translated as a system of alternate bullying and bribing; and this plan of first coercion and then conciliation was a pretty good illustration of our general Irish policy.

'How often I think of the remark which the Sage made to Rasselas:—"Behold, my son, with how little wisdom the

world is governed.” Whether he was thinking of Ireland, when he said “the world,” I know not.

‘All this time while we were debating, Ireland continued in a state of “veiled” (and rather thinly veiled) “insurrection” —to use one of Mr. Disraeli’s phrases. Most of those who read this book are probably familiar with the word “Boycott,” but very likely not many of them know the origin of the word, which had its genesis about this period. A certain Captain Boycott, living in Ireland, having fallen under the displeasure of the Land League and of his neighbours, could not get any labourers to gather in his crops or supply him with the ordinary requirements of life. If I remember rightly, soldiers were sent down to protect and aid him; and, as his case was rather a prominent one, the phrase to be “Boycotted” came into vogue, and has now taken its regular place in our language.

‘These words seem to come when they are needed. I have alluded already to the invention of the word “Jingo.” That word, also, remains a component part of our language. Possibly I may live long enough to see fresh phrases brought into action in fresh circumstances which may require some fresh name to describe them shortly and picturesquely. Thus does language seem to be evolved.

‘It was in this Session that Mr. Healy first appeared in Parliament<sup>1</sup> where he has since become such a prominent figure. Among all the Parliamentarians with whom I have come into contact Mr. Healy is, I should say, about the “smartest.” Seldom, I should think, has there been a cleverer or shrewder debater. When once fairly launched on a speech in defence of Ireland and denunciation of her wrongs, few things were better or more forcible in their way than a speech from Mr. Healy. But I mention him now, as I remember his maiden speech in which he declared that he would not be “bullied” (pronouncing the word as in “dull”)

<sup>1</sup> As M.P. for Wexford.

by Lord Hartington, who had spoken before him. In this same maiden speech he was called to order by the Speaker, which was pretty good for a beginning.

‘Few things struck me more when in Parliament than the way in which the Irish Members—many of them unlearned and ignorant men—seemed to jump at once into a certain knowledge of Parliamentary business. Doubtless, however, many of them acted on Parnell’s advice, who told a new Member who asked him the best way to learn the rules of the House—“By breaking them.”

‘All this Session the first stage of the Transvaal trouble was brewing, and I felt strongly the folly and injustice of the way in which we were going on; and it appeared to me that Mr. Gladstone, by allowing this policy of Boer-bullying, was acting inconsistently with all that he had said about non-intervention and Peace. It so happened that just at this time, when we were busy fighting the Boers with a view to retain them as subjects instead of as friends, a vacancy was caused in the representation of East Cumberland by the death of Mr. N. Hodgson, the Tory Member. Mr. George Howard, a valued friend of mine, was the Liberal candidate, and he was opposed by the Right Hon. James Lowther, that staunch, genuine, unchangeable Tory. This was a very bitter situation for me. Mr. Howard would not say a word in condemnation of the Transvaal policy, and I felt that I could not conscientiously give it any sort of sanction. In the natural course of events, I should have taken a prominent part in the contest on the Liberal side. I, however, did nothing more than merely vote for Mr. Howard, as far the better of the two candidates, although so thoroughly unsatisfactory to me on the burning question of the day. It was one of those cases where one has just to submit to being misunderstood and reviled—which, in such a case as this, among my intimate friends, was far more than unpleasant. But one had better not go into politics at all if one expects



to steer clear of unpleasantnesses. In this case I was truly thankful, however, that Mr. Howard managed to beat Mr. James Lowther by the very narrow majority of thirty.'

At this stage of the narrative it is, I think, opportune to introduce some verses which Lawson pressed into my hand one day early in the Session of 1881. They represent, very characteristically, his peculiar blend of sharp criticism with playful temper; and are, I think, about as good as any of the innumerable rhymes which his friends have collected:—

'Don't embarrass the Government!' Fourteen good men—  
 We could never collect such a fourteen again:  
 A firm bulwark, they stand for our 'prestige' and glory,  
 They keep *in* the Whigs and they keep *out* the Tory.  
 Don't embarrass the Government! Leave them alone;  
 They're the very best Government ever was known.  
 'Peace, Retrenchment, Reform!' they proclaimed loud and  
 clear,  
 When boldly they went to the country last year.  
 'Peace, Retrenchment, Reform!' we all shouted together,  
 'The Liberal Party!' and 'Nothing like leather!'  
 Don't embarrass the men we thus put into power,  
 If they *cannot* set everything right in an hour.  
 With what difficult matters they've had to contend!  
 Nay, inherited troubles and toil without end!  
 The deeds of those Tories, so mean and so base,  
 Left behind them a legacy rich in disgrace.  
 These fourteen good men were the heirs of entail:  
 'Tis unfair their proceedings as yet to assail,  
 Whate'er they do wrong is the fault of the Tory;  
 Whate'er they do right but augments their own glory.  
 Make allowance. They're terribly hampered, you know,  
 'Don't embarrass the Government!' never, dear no!  
 'Don't embarrass the Government!' pause first and think.  
 If you do, from a course such as that you will shrink.  
 You don't like Coercion? I hate it, 'tis true;  
 But only consider—what *were* they to do?

The Tories required it, Sir Stafford insisted ;  
And forces like these should be never resisted.  
Besides, all respectable people are pleased  
When the Members from Ireland are worried and teased.  
How gladly we vote in each crushing division,  
When 'the lot' were suspended, what shouts of derision !  
Though we've fallen on curious political weather,  
We've succeeded in 'keeping the Party together.'  
You don't like Intervention with each foreign nation,  
Or sending a fleet for a grand Demonstration ?  
But consider a minute the fix we were in :  
We were bound to enforce the decrees of Berlin.  
The treaty was 'rot,' as we very well knew,  
But once more I ask you, what *were* we to do ?  
The world's full of Jingoese who must be obeyed,  
And displays of our force must be frequently made.  
Even dwellers in Mesopotamia must feel  
The strength of our arm and the edge of our steel.  
' You object to the shooting of Boers,' do you say ?  
Well, that's awkward, I'm bound to admit, in a way.  
But remember our forces were thoroughly beat,  
And the Tories would howl if we made a retreat.  
We must keep up our power on Africa's shores,  
And try if, in turn, *we* can't kill a few Boers.  
Last session besides we secured a great name  
By the measure we passed for destroying 'Ground Game.'  
And even more pleased the Dissenters were still  
When we pushed through the Commons their Burials Bill.  
Don't attempt then the Government's action to fetter ;  
Their deeds have been good—their intentions still better ;  
There's a Land Bill in store which is sure to impart  
Warmth, comfort, and joy to the Liberal heart.  
' Don't embarrass the Government !' leave them quite free,  
If you'll only do that you will see—what you'll see.  
*We* may all be embarrassed again and again,  
But we must not embarrass the Fourteen Good Men.  
Let Boers be shot down till a desert is made ;  
Let Basutos be butchered and Greeks be betrayed

Let millions on millions be squandered away,  
And the Irish disturbance grow worse every day.  
'Don't embarrass the Government!' still I implore;  
The more blunders they make, only trust them the more.  
Faith bids you the best to believe and assume;  
Hope bids you be cheerful in spite of the gloom.  
While Charity tells you, forgiving all sins,  
With firmness to stick to the party that wins.  
So patiently wait till embarrassments cease,  
And the Liberal Party be buried in peace.

'On April 19, 1881, Lord Beaconsfield died, and on May 9 Mr. Gladstone moved in the House for a monument to the departed statesman. For some reason or other, I chanced to have something to say to Mr. Gladstone in the Lobby a little while before this motion came on, and I remember his telling me that he never had anything to do which he felt more difficult, or words to that effect. One can fancy that this must have been so. The nature of the two men was absolutely antagonistic. They looked on life in an absolutely different way; and their means of obtaining and maintaining power were as dissimilar as possible. I wondered what he could say. But, when he spoke, my wonder was turned into admiration. For five and twenty minutes he dealt with the character and conduct of his late rival, with all his usual eloquence and even more than his usual skill. He cleverly made it clear that he would not indulge in extravagant eulogy. But he said that Lord Beaconsfield had sustained a great historical part, and also that the deeds which he had done were done with the "full authority of the organ of the Nation and of the Nation itself." He alluded to his being associated with the Reform of the Franchise, and even touched on the Berlin Treaty. He said that—besides his intellectual qualities—he had strength of will, tenacity of purpose, power of government, parliamentary courage, and sympathy with his race. He concluded with

acquitting Lord Beaconsfield of any personal feeling against himself, and then wound up, quite successfully, without loss of dignity or sacrifice of truth, as difficult a speech as ever anyone was called upon to make. Northcote followed with a tolerable echo of Gladstone's words. Labouchere objected to the motion on principle. But drawing the line in cases such as this is exceedingly difficult and, on the whole, I thought it better to vote for the motion, against which only fifty-four votes were recorded against 380.

'There is hardly any question commonly put to one which it is so difficult to answer as "Where will you draw the line?" I have heard of a man who said that had he known, when in his cradle, how often in after life he would be asked "where will you draw the line?"—he would have had a line drawn round his own neck!

'During this Session a vote of thanks was moved to our troops who had been fighting in Afghanistan. I opposed it. Why soldiers are to be specially thanked for doing their duty any more than Judges, Bishops, Policemen, or Civil Servants, I never know. The system is one means of glorifying "might against right," which all fighting is more or less. In my speech I ventured to point out that a policeman's duty is more to be admired than that of a soldier. The soldier's duty is to break the peace. The policeman's is to keep the peace.

'I, likewise, in alluding to the strange circumstances in which we found ourselves, having been absolutely at peace with everyone for some months, quoted the words of a friend who said that if we did not take care "we should be slipping into Christianity." I forget who the friend was—probably he is dead and gone, but I remain to witness how unnecessary was the fear that we should ever do anything of that kind.

'Mr. Spurgeon used to tell a story of asking a boy whether his Father was a Christian, to which the boy replied: "Yes, Father's a Christian, but he doesn't do much at it"; which



has always seemed to me to be an admirable description of the British Nation.

‘ This year I again carried my Local Option Resolution by the increased majority of forty-two. We had, of course, the usual sort of Debate, in the course of which Colonel Makins<sup>1</sup> good-humouredly called me “the eloquent and hilarious advocate of the Pump.” Why a certain class of politicians always speak of the Pump as a something contemptible I know not. Possibly it may be because they have no very intimate acquaintance with its contents. They would find it very harmless. I have never heard of a coroner’s verdict declaring that anyone had died through excessive drinking of pump-water. Indeed some people seem to think it is too good for them, as indicated in the following lines :—

‘ Pure water is the best of gifts  
Which man to man can bring,  
But who am I that I should have  
The best of anything ?  
Let Princes revel at the pump,  
Peers with the Pond make free,  
But whiskey, gin, or even beer  
Is good enough for me.

‘ I remember Lord Randolph Churchill at one time making a speech in the country, and saying that there were only two public questions—Ireland and Egypt. This might have been said tolerably correctly in connexion with the Session of 1882. Out of 405 Divisions which took place, I calculated that 205 of them were more or less connected with Irish questions. Time would fail to tell of the interminable debates on Coercion, and on the Arrears of Rent Bill ; all which Debates were continually giving rise to angry contentions, frivolous and obstructive Divisions, and ever-recurring suspension of Irish Members—once or twice in a wholesale

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for South Essex.

manner. All this was very humiliating, but without drastic and suspensory measures one does not see how any business at all could have been done in the House. Certainly this was the period when the Irish question assumed its most hopeless and dreadful aspect.

‘In the earlier part of the Session we had what was called the “Kilmainham Treaty.” One often, in striving after brevity in description, falls into inaccuracy; but I must hope that my very rough summary may be tolerably accurate. Shortly then, Gladstone had imprisoned in Kilmainham Gaol Parnell and other Irish Members some time during the recess; and, when he did so, an Irishman was reported to have wired to a friend “Parnell arrested; Gladstone still at large.”

‘In prison these men were,—as I have said,—and somehow or other Gladstone got it conveyed to them that he would release them on Parnell’s agreeing, or giving an understood promise, to support the Government in ameliorative measures for Ireland. In short one might call it an understood working agreement between Parnell and the Government. Endless, bitter, and excited debates arose over this step, the immorality of which, according to the Tories, was great, and which they denounced in all the moods and tenses. Forster, the Chief Secretary, resigned, and condemned the new policy; Lord Cowper relinquished the Lord Lieutenancy; and these places were filled by Lord Spencer as Lord Lieutenant and Lord Frederick Cavendish<sup>1</sup> as Chief Secretary. But in a moment all hopes of any good arising from this treaty, or concordat, or whatever it was, were cast to the winds by the murder in Dublin on May 6, 1882, of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke, the Under Secretary. This occurred on a Saturday, and the news was known to many people in London that evening; but it was only announced to the world at large by the newspapers on Sunday morning. The effect was horrifying—almost stupefying. No one who walked in

<sup>1</sup> 1836–1882: M.P. for the North-West Riding.

the streets of London that day can ever forget the sort of ghastly depression which seemed to affect everyone. Perfect strangers seemed disposed to speak in sympathizing, horror-stricken words with those whom they met. In short there was—not a darkness which could be felt—but a moral gloom which could be felt over the whole place.

‘Of course, the political effect was that more extreme coercive measures were demanded by political opinion, and the Government promptly met the demand by a new Prevention of Crime Bill, and we started once more on the hopeless, miserable, never-ending attempt to settle the Irish difficulty by force. I am not blaming the Government. In the state of public opinion I know not what else they could have done. I am only indicating the heart-breaking nature of the whole situation. Meanwhile Mr. Trevelyan gallantly consented to fill the place of the murdered Lord Frederick Cavendish. It has always seemed to me that this was a truly public-spirited and unselfish act, worthy of all remembrance. Danger, drudgery, discomfort, all lay before him; but, while others declined the difficult duty, he stepped in and braved the situation.

‘In the House, where business assumed the aspect of little more than one interminable Irish wrangle, we were, however by and bye, brought face to face with what was called the Egyptian Question. Here again I must take the risk of summarizing and stating what the Egyptian Question was. Ismail Pasha, the ruler of Egypt, managed to run up a national debt of about 100,000,000*l.* quicker, and for more useless purposes, than any potentate had ever managed to do before. The pressure on the wretched people who had to pay was very great. In course of time a revolt, headed by Arabi Pasha, broke out, with the object of getting some relief from the grinding taxation. Some species of self-government was aimed at. But those who had lent money to Egypt became alarmed, and on their behalf our Government thought



it necessary to interfere, and to put down the insurrection of Arabi. That was the Egyptian Question, in support of this policy of looking after the Egyptian bond-holders by arms.

‘ Lord Salisbury, Sir Stafford Northcote, and other leading Tories held a meeting on June 29, at Willis’s Rooms, when they “pulled the Lion’s tail” vigorously. This always has to be done when a war has to be concocted. Neither men nor animals, as a rule, will fight unless you can first make them angry. This meeting strengthened the Government in the line which they were taking on behalf of the Bond-holders. When the Government of the day and the Opposition of the day take the same side one may be almost sure that some great wrong is at hand. And so it was here. Speeches and despatches and threats and swaggering sentiments were put forth, and we worked on in this way until, on July 11, our Fleet bombarded Alexandria; battering down its rotten old forts pretty quickly, and killing numbers of the Egyptians. This was too much for Mr. Bright, who, on July 17, announced in the House his retirement from the Government. Looking back, I think it was a pity that he ever entered it. He was a greater power when outside any ministerial combination than when in it. His resignation was too late to stop the mischief, and the Egyptian policy was continued by the invasion of Egypt, and the battle of Tel-el-Kebir, where Arabi was overthrown and the Egyptian people virtually given over to the English Government and the Bond-holders.

‘ As I am writing about things connected with myself I cannot but say that I looked on all these proceedings with an astonishment and disgust which I cannot describe. For days and days I thought and hoped that I was living in a dream, and that it could not be possible that Mr. Gladstone—fresh from the Midlothian Campaign, where he had preached so gloriously Peace and Non-intervention—should now be carrying fire and sword into a country which only wanted to



be let alone to govern itself; and all for a lot of money-lenders and usurers.

‘The usual stuff was talked, of course, about English influence, keeping the Canal open, preventing other nations getting hold of Egypt, etc., etc. But a City man talking on the subject to a friend of mine put the whole case in a nutshell. “Unified” was the name at that time of the principal Egyptian stock, and he said: “What we want is Unifields at eighty.” Well, they’ve got them far above eighty; the years have gone by, and there is, I think, no doubt that the control which we have kept ever since in Egypt—though we told all the Powers that we were going to leave it—has resulted in better administration and better Government for the people. But, nevertheless, it was wrong; and I believe it will always remain the greatest stain on Mr. Gladstone’s career. Nothing in politics ever gave me such a shock. To quote the words in Mr. Bright’s note to me on another subject, which I have transcribed above: “If an enemy had done it, I might have borne it.” But that Mr. Gladstone should suddenly have gone on the war-path—a path which led to prolonged fightings and humiliations later—not only distressed but almost dazed me.

‘I did my best, both in the House and out of it, to point out to the public the iniquity of our proceedings, but with little enough effect. Here is a small incident which illustrates the state, then, of the public mind. I, along with others, spoke to a public meeting in Glasgow, giving the facts of the case and denouncing the war. On my concluding, up got a Glasgow politician, who I believe was President of some Liberal Club or something of that kind, and moved an amendment; saying that Sir W. Lawson and his friends had quoted the Blue Books, but he was quite satisfied with what the newspapers told him. Whereupon, the amendment was carried and sent up to Mr. Gladstone, who cordially acknowledged it to the sender. There was a sort of poetic justice

in this worthy politician being, in after years, one of the Glasgow Unionist members sworn to oppose Mr. Gladstone to the death.

‘All that I have seen during my public life of the way in which wars are “got up” in this country makes me understand what Mr. Cobden meant when, speaking after the Crimean War was over, he declared that, if ever another great war broke out in this country, he would not agitate against it; for it was of no more use to do so than to reason with a man in a state of delirium. I do not say Mr. Cobden was right, however, in his conclusion. A fever may be raging round, but there are some not affected by it, and to them it is our duty to appeal; and I do not regret the humble stand which I myself have made, at times, against the military madness which ever and anon attacks this nation.

‘What with Ireland and Egypt, we had not many very interesting Debates on other subjects during this Session (1882).

‘There was very languid interest in any question of social or political reform during this period. One day Labouchere had a notice on the paper for a Resolution against the House of Lords, which was to come on when the House met at nine o’clock. In the course of the day I asked him whether he thought there would be a House at nine o’clock. “No,” he said, “I think not; you see, most of the Radicals want to be Peers.” He was right about the House, though I do not know whether he was right about the Radicals.

‘I find that I described the action of politicians during the recess which followed the Session of 1882 as follows:—  
“Liberal Members employed themselves a good deal in speaking up and down the country, the burden of their song being that Gladstone was almost divine, and that they agreed with him; and, as to the Egyptian war, that the Liberals had killed more people in less time, and done it cheaper, than ever the Tories had.”

‘The Channel Tunnel was one of the subjects which came up in the Session of 1883. Few things seem to me more extraordinary than the bitter opposition which this project met with, and continues to meet with. I have pretty well heard the arguments—“pro” and “con”—the latter being all of a military nature. We are told that the French army coming through this hole might surprise us. Surely, one would think that watching a hole would be the easiest thing in the world. A slang expression describes a man, who is pretty well done for, as being “in a hole.” I know nothing whatever of tactics, but I still have the strongest conviction that to have a hostile French army in a hole would be the very best place for it; and if all the English forces—horse, foot, and artillery—could not prevent its getting out, those forces must be incompetent, impotent, and idiotic. But the military men tell us that they really could not watch this hole successfully, and their opinion is still paramount.

‘Something occurred this Session, which throws a light on the supposed difficulty of getting measures through Parliament. There was a dynamite scare. Harcourt brought in a Bill to deal with it. In an hour and a half it was through *all its stages* in the House of Commons, and on reaching the House of Lords was passed through it equally rapidly. This shows that when the House *wants* to do anything, or when public opinion is really roused, there is no difficulty as regards despatch of business. In ordinary times, the veiled desire of most of the House on both sides is to prevent anything being done; and in this they generally succeed most admirably. There was a little illustration of this, about this time. There is a rule that if a count of the House is demanded, and it is found that there are not forty Members in their places at the moment, the House immediately adjourns. One day Mr. Hussey Vivian<sup>1</sup> proposed an alteration in this rule to the effect that if it were found that forty Members were not

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Glamorganshire; created Lord Swansea 1893.



present, there should be an end to the discussion of the Question which was then being debated, and the House should proceed to the next business. This would have been counting out the question—possibly a very frivolous one—and not counting out the House; leaving the latter to attend to any other more popular and more important business which might be on the paper. This seemed to me to be an eminently common-sense suggestion, but the pundits looked on it as a dreadful innovation; so much so that Mr. Hussey Vivian did not dare to divide, and nothing has since been heard of the suggestion.

‘The Bradlaugh question was with us in an aggravated form more or less through the whole of this Session; the most interesting development of it being a Bill, which the Government introduced, to permit an affirmation being made instead of an oath. This was, of course, naturally enough, called by the Tories a “Bradlaugh Relief Bill,” and so it was in a sense; and why Bradlaugh was not to be relieved if he suffered from an injustice, as much as anyone else, I know not. Gladstone made one of his most magnificent speeches in support of this Bill. Never did he appear to me to greater advantage. I should think that he literally loathed the theological—or non-theological—opinions of Mr. Bradlaugh. Between the two men there could be no personal sympathy whatever. But Mr. Gladstone saw in him the sign, symbol, and impersonation of a gross political injustice; and, rising superior to all petty, personal, or sectarian feelings, he pleaded with amazing and overpowering eloquence for justice, equality, and freedom of opinion. He knew the folly of attempting in any way to coerce opinion and to place any kind of penalty upon it.

‘Heads bow, knees bend, hands serve around a throne;  
Our hearts are free, our thoughts are still our own!

‘After much debating, at last came the night for the Second



Reading of the Government Bill (May 3, 1883), and what a scene it was. There sat the great Tory Party, all of them excited by the chance of a great party victory, some enjoying the excitement of the fray, and some inflamed by sectarian bigotry. Then, on this occasion they had as their allies the bulk of the Irish Party, whose theological views in a case like this neutralized their political affinities. The Division came and we were beaten by three. I never, I think, heard more prolonged, triumphant, and tumultuous cheering, accompanied by waving of hats, etc. I was sitting on the step of the gangway, alongside of Mr. Albert Grey<sup>1</sup> (the present Earl Grey). The noise was so tremendous that we could scarcely hear each other speak, but I remember his saying quietly amid the din: "This is all right for us." And, of course, it was all right for us; and, after another year or two of contention and friction and disturbance, the Bradlaugh question was settled on the basis of common sense and justice, and the rights of the Constituencies were vindicated.

'In this Session, for the third time I carried my Local Option Resolution. In 1880 my majority was twenty-six. In 1881—forty-two, and in 1883—eighty-seven. On this last occasion I introduced the word "urgently" into the Resolution. So we have a measure by which to judge what is the House of Commons idea of "urgency." They passed a Resolution that the entrusting the people with powers to protect themselves from drink-shops was "urgently" required in 1883. I am writing these lines in 1901 and they have not yet entrusted the people with this power. They see little harm in waiting, like the Irishman one has heard of. A comrade called to him that a man had fallen into a bog. "Is he far in?" he said. "No," said his companion. "Then," said the first man, "he can wait." "But," said the other, "he's in head first." Unfortunately, the nation is already over head in the liquor-quagmire. But the remarkable

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for South Northumberland.

incident in connexion with the moving of this Resolution this year was that Mr. Gladstone, for the first time, spoke and voted for it, and to the end of his life he never "went back upon" this vote.

'At the beginning of the Session of 1884 Sir Henry Brand retired from the Speakership, which office he had filled with so much acceptance. The last day of his filling the chair was February 25, when Gladstone and Northcote moved and seconded a vote of thanks to him; to which he replied in a beautiful speech. But even more touching and more human was a little impromptu incident which occurred about midnight, when he finally left the Chair and the House. Those of us who were then still in the House shook hands with him, and then, lining the little space which there is behind the Speaker's Chair ere the outer door is reached, we gave him three hearty cheers. I can see him now, as, gathering his robes about him, he passed through the little throng, simply saying: "I am very sorry to leave you all." He was, I think, an excellent Speaker, notwithstanding his—to my mind—great mistake over the Bradlaugh business. What a Speaker needs specially are—patience, good humour, and common sense. Probably these qualities, however, would go far to make a man a success in any line of life. Mr. Speaker Brand possessed them all.

The Session commenced with a party fight on Egypt, in which I took a part. In looking back I feel satisfaction in having steadily opposed all the raids and robberies which were the outcome of our so called Foreign Policy; and I feel that satisfaction, notwithstanding that the popular desire in England—at the time of writing this—is thoroughly Jingo.

'I remember one day (March 3) I moved the adjournment in order to condemn a useless battle in the East, where we had mown down a thousand Arabs with the ease which is manifest when the strong come in contact with the weak.

Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Henry Richard, and others supported me. Whereupon a religious newspaper spoke thus of us : we were guilty of "factious partisanship" and "arrogant folly." We were "persons inebriated" (fancy my being inebriated !) "by their own fanatical crotchets and irresponsible audacity." We were a "loquacious crew," "English nondescripts," "savages and monomaniacs." Mr. Henry Richard was called "a well-meaning enthusiast, entirely at sea as to facts" and Mr. Labouchere was described as a "political scapegrace, whose action is characterized by reckless and insolent injustice." And all this because we criticized massacre. The paper was called the *Christian World*, but I think a better title would have been the *Worldly Christian*.

Another rather interesting incident took place a little later (March 15) in connexion with our Eastern policy. It was a Saturday sitting to deal with supplementary war-estimates, and Labouchere took the opportunity of moving a Resolution condemning all the Egyptian military proceedings. There was a small House, but the Radicals were fairly well represented ; and the Tories, seeing, as they thought, an opportunity of defeating the Government, voted in good numbers, with the result that the Government only won by a majority of seventeen. On the announcement of the numbers, Harcourt said loud enough to be heard across the Table : "So this dirty trick has failed." Whereupon, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach<sup>1</sup> jumped up and called the Speaker's attention to the words. There was some excitement for a time, but of course the Speaker could not condemn words not intended to have been heard, and the incident subsided ; but the Debate was always called the "Dirty Trick Debate."

'This year we had the last of our Reform Bills—virtually giving Household Suffrage to the Counties, and we carried the

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, M.P. for East Gloucestershire ; created Viscount St. Aldwyn 1906.



Second Reading (April 7) by a majority of 130, and the Third Reading was carried (June 26) *nemine contradicente*, as Mr. Gladstone made a point of having recorded. But on July 8 the Lords, by a majority of fifty-nine, declined to read the Bill a second time unless it had Redistribution coupled with enfranchisement. This action on their part caused excitement in the country, and an Autumn Session was decided on. There was plenty of agitation for the two months between the Prorogation and the meeting of the House on Oct. 23. We now, on the Second Reading of Gladstone's new Reform Bill, increased our majority to 140. Soon after, Gladstone made a compromise with the House of Lords, and brought in a Redistribution Bill; and ultimately the two Bills became law.

'I recite these details because it was at this crisis that Gladstone threw away the chance of crippling the House of Lords. The people were quite ready to follow his lead, but he was apparently not ready to lead them. So this ludicrous and mischievous Legislative marplot remains until this day. This comes of not "taking occasion by the hand, when it offers itself to you." "Procrastination, etc."—we all know the proverb, or as Dr. Talmage put it in one of his sermons: "The road 'by and bye' terminates in 'never.'" However, the compromise got us Mr. Gladstone's Bill through, to the disgust of staunch Tories like Mr. Chaplin,<sup>1</sup> who said he "felt that he had a rope round his neck, tugged at by Salisbury and Gladstone."

'The public and Parliamentary events of the year 1885 were of rather exceptional interest. I was, however, abroad during the early months of the year. There was a famous Russian scare in connexion with the relations between Russia and Afghanistan, and the war-mongers smacked their lips in anticipation of our having to resort to arms in defence of the Afghans. Mr. Gladstone moved a Vote of Credit for

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. Henry Chaplin, M.P. for Mid-Lincolnshire.



11,000,000*l.* in view of the position. I believe this was one of his greatest speeches. At any rate, he succeeded in "bulldozing" the House, who unanimously, and without a word, voted the money. . . . But strange to say, after all this swagger, this Russian difficulty was settled in some sort of a sensible manner. As an indication of the way in which public opinion looks on these wars and rumours of wars, I remember Lord Randolph Churchill said in the House, when it was announced that a settlement was probable, that it was "terrible news."

'Meanwhile the details of the new Reform Bill were arranged mainly by agreement between the two parties, and the rope was tightened round Mr. Chaplin's neck.

'But the Opposition ran the Government pretty close by proposing Motions and Resolutions condemning their Foreign Policy. The usual course in these matters is for the Tories to goad the Liberals—simple and flabby as these latter generally are—into hostile and warlike measures, and then to turn round and condemn them for having badly carried out those measures. That is the sort of thing which has gone on, which is going on, and which will, I suppose, go on indefinitely. These continued attacks on the Government no doubt shook it, and prepared the way for a successful attack. Mr. Childers,<sup>1</sup> the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had brought in a Budget of 100,000,000*l.* This was an astonishing sum in those days, and I remember writing some lines on it—the words "hundred million Budget" rhyming in a handy manner with "judge it," "grudge it," and so forth. But it was not the amount of the Budget over which the Government came to trouble; it was over the manner in which the money was to be raised. Mr. Childers proposed some increase of the Drink-Duties: the Opposition fastened on this, and Sir M. Hicks-Beach moved a condemnatory amendment. On the ensuing Division much has been said and written,

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. H. C. E. Childers (1827–1896), M.P. for Pontefract.

and many shrewd persons have stated their belief that the Government wished to be beaten. Be that as it may, they were beaten (June 8) by a majority of fourteen.

‘Although for so long a time a Member of the House of Commons, yet I have chanced to miss some of the most exciting crises in that House. By all accounts, the scene that night, when the Government was thus beaten, was most extraordinary: members of the Opposition, led by Lord Randolph Churchill, jumping on the benches, waving their hats, and shouting like those in delirium. The result was that, after the usual number of explanations, which explained nothing, and a few meetings of the House to hear these explanations, Lord Salisbury was installed as Prime Minister.

‘In the course of these proceedings, I took the opportunity of moving what was really a vote of “No Confidence” in the newly appointed Government. I rather think Labouchere seconded and “told” with me. The only two Members who supported me in the Lobby were Briggs<sup>1</sup> and Carbutt,<sup>2</sup> both of whom subsequently became Unionists. This proceeding of mine, looked at in the dry light of “the subsequent,” looks rather futile. Yet, on consideration, it seems to me now, as it did then, that a more ridiculous thing was for a House of Commons containing a large Liberal majority to acquiesce in the installation of a Conservative Government. Because the Liberals had been beaten on the details of their Budget, it did not seem to follow that they should at once agree to a Tory régime. Mr. Bright once told me that when he was in office and the Government had got into a difficulty, one of his colleagues had to make a speech in their defence. When he sat down, Mr. Bright said to him: “That was very convincing,” to which his colleague replied “It didn’t convince myself.” Possibly I might make the same remark with respect to my above given argument in favour of a vote of No Confidence. How my reader will view this incident I cannot tell. I had

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Blackburn.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for Monmouth Boroughs.

forgotten all about it until I came across it in my Journal, and it is rather interesting to see how one views incidents of this kind after the lapse of years.

'I note that in a talk in the House over Hicks-Beach's revised Budget, which he had to bring in after becoming Chancellor of the Exchequer in the new Government, Childers told him that he (Hicks-Beach) "had sounded the knell of indirect taxation." Alas! indirect taxation does not die so easily as all that, as the last few years have proved, and I rather marvel that Childers should have said what he did on this point. I wish it had been true. I am divided in my mind as to which man did the most harm to the human race—the man who invented indirect taxation, or the man who made religious creeds a matter to be dealt with by Government. But I do not know who either of these men was.

'We had as usual a few Irish excitements ere the end of the Session. I remember speaking for, and voting with, the Irishmen one night in a small minority, when I thought they had made out a grievance very clearly and unanswerably, but finding out soon after that their facts were all wrong. This reminded me of a remark made to me years ago by Mr. T. W. Russell. I asked him one day to give me some general information on Irish matters. "Certainly," he said, "but before we begin, you must remember there are no facts in Ireland." Many a time has that remark recurred to me.

'Bright in these days made himself obnoxious to the Irish Members by some disparaging remarks which he had made on them at a public dinner, and it was all brought up in the House. Certainly they are most ingenious in manufacturing incidents and never letting any one escape who does or says anything disparaging to "The Boys." I cannot help thinking that the reckless way in which they attacked Bright now and then may have had something to do with the bitterness which he showed towards them in the subsequent days, when Home Rule became a part of practical politics. Certainly the



speeches of Bright in former days contained, and contain to this day, the most convincing and eloquent arguments in favour of Home Rule which I have ever read. How he could have taken the course he did a little later is to me a mystery. I had the warmest admiration for Bright in life, and I truly reverence him in death; but I think his course on the Irish Question shows the frailty even of the noblest and best among us.

Towards the end of the Session I went down to Richmond to dine at a public dinner in connexion with Cyrus Field, a great hero of Transatlantic Telegraph. I expected a very interesting dinner, but, following the usual course of expectations, found it very dull. But the incident made me moralize. I remembered how wise and well-intentioned and hopeful men predicted, when first the Atlantic Cable was established, how it would greatly promote the peace of the world, Longfellow expressing the idea in the beautiful lines :—

‘Weave on, swift shuttle of the Lord, beneath the Deep afar  
The bridal-robe of Earth’s accord, the funeral-shroud of War.

“The funeral-shroud of war”! and where are we now? Echo answers “where?”

‘But time went on, and the eyes of all politicians were turned to the General Election due in the Autumn, which was to decide the issue between Salisbury and Gladstone. I find my rough summary of events detailed in a manner which seems tolerably true, and I venture to reproduce it. ‘The Autumn was spent in electioneering. Chamberlain made strong Radical speeches, which somewhat pleased Liberals and greatly displeased Tories. Gladstone issued a manifesto which did not say much, but implied that he was pretty ready to do what the new Parliament should desire. Salisbury raised the cry of “The Church in danger.”’<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The immediate occasion of this cry was an article on Disestablishment in *The Radical Programme*, edited by the Right Hon. J. Chamberlain, M.P.



‘When the Election came the Boroughs went very Tory—notably Leeds and Manchester,—but the balance was redressed by the Counties, in which the new electorate gave many surprising Liberal victories. The Irish, who as a rule voted for the Tories everywhere, and who to a considerable extent caused the Liberal reverses in the Boroughs, got 85 Parnellites returned for Ireland, which also returned 15 Tories and not a single Liberal. On December 4, the Cocker-mouth Division of Cumberland polled as follows :—

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Valentine (Tory)	. . . .	3855
Lawson (Liberal)	. . . .	3845

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Majority for Valentine . . .	10
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Exit Lawson, feebly smiling.

‘I have always understood that the principal reason for this defeat was that the Irish in the Constituency, under the direction of Parnell (and there were 400 or 500 of them) voted for the Tory. Nobody likes to be beaten—whatever hypocrites may say—and I did not like it better than anybody else. When long ago, Macaulay was beaten at Edinburgh by one of the usual combinations of all the “Interests” against the march of progress, he sat down in the evening and wrote one of the most touching and beautiful poems extant. But, even if I had had the power to write a good poem on this defeat, there were not the elements for it, for even at the very moment of my overthrow the comic features of the affair presented themselves to me quite irresistibly. Here was I, who, in my humble way, had worked as hard as anyone to obtain the Franchise for my poorer countrymen, kicked out of Parliament by the labourers on the very first occasion when they were able to use their new votes. Here, also, were the Irishmen, for whom I, almost alone among English Members, used to vote in the House of Commons, rallying almost solid for my overthrow. It was too funny, and even

now I smile when I think of it, notwithstanding the political discouragement of such a catastrophe, which, being brought about (as I have said above) by those who one thought were one's friends, recalled to mind Byron's lines on the Struck Eagle—though in applying it to myself the reader had better substitute Crow or Jackdaw for Eagle.

‘So the struck Eagle, stretched upon the plain,  
No more through rolling clouds to soar again,  
Viewed his own feather on the fatal dart,  
And winged the shaft that quivered in his heart;  
Keen were his pangs, but keener far to feel  
He nursed the pinion which impelled the steel,  
While the same plumage that had warmed his nest  
Drank the last life-drop of his bleeding breast.

‘A little incident which occurred on the declaration of the Poll shows how unprepared were the public for this Tory triumph. The Cockermouth Post-Office was exactly opposite the place where the Poll was declared, and there were the newspaper correspondents gathered together with their telegrams ready for sending off instant, and in every case they had prepared the name of Lawson at the top and Valentine at the bottom. But alas! It was a case of “the first being last and the last first”!

‘My opponent was a worthy man who appealed pretty much to the working-men voters on Protectionist grounds. He was also a steady advocate of Temperance, and as he was ready to vote for the people being entrusted with the power to protect themselves from the Liquor-Traffic, I particularly impressed on the managers of the “Alliance” that they must not employ the funds and influence of that Association against my opponent. Very possibly, had they done otherwise, the small majority which decided the matter might not have been gained by the Tories. But it was far better to lose an Election than to do anything which might have

put the Alliance in a false position. The course taken was the straight one, and it is a true saying that "No one was ever lost on a straight road."

A rather marvellous thing now happened. When the returns of the General Election were made up, it appeared that the two parties were equally divided, reckoning the eighty-five Irish Nationalists on the Liberal side. This, of course, really made the Irishmen masters of the situation, and able to defeat Lord Salisbury's Government, whenever they joined hands with the Liberals. This was just what Mr. Gladstone in one of his Election speeches had entreated the Constituencies to prevent, by returning a clear majority of Liberals; pointing out the great peril to political morality which would arise from such a position of parties. But now things were hurrying on to the greatest political crisis of our time.'

## CHAPTER VIII

## THE IRISH QUESTION

THE Election of 1885 was of course a bitter disappointment to all, whether enthusiasts or wire-pullers, who had hoped that the Liberal votes of the newly-entranced electors in the Counties would outweigh the hostile judgment of the Boroughs. Gladstone and his colleagues had rushed out of office in the previous June (when they could easily have retained their places and have introduced an amended Budget), because they thought that they could compose their internal differences more easily in Opposition than in office; and were serenely confident that the General Election would restore them to power. Their confidence was, as we have seen, not justified by the result; but, though not in office, the Liberals came back from the Election in a very satisfactory position. They were strong in numbers, in enthusiasm, and, at least for the moment, in union. They had at their head Gladstone's unique character and authority. In Mr. Chamberlain they had a wonderfully effective champion; the most skilful of demagogues, and just then at the zenith of his popularity. Their opponents were notoriously distracted by internecine jealousies, and dependent for their continuance in office on the precarious support of the Irish members. In a word, the Liberals were an exceptionally strong Opposition; and it seemed indisputable that, as soon as Parliament met, they would be able to drive the Government into a very tight place. But a totally unsuspected peril was at hand, and it burst with volcanic suddenness and violence. On December 17, 1885, the world was astounded by an anonymous paragraph stating that Mr. Gladstone, if he returned to office, was prepared to deal in a liberal spirit



with the demand for Home Rule. Lord Morley of Blackburn justly observes that 'the public mind, bewildered as it was by the situation that the curious issue of the Election had created, was thrown by this announcement into extraordinary commotion. . . . Gladstone on the same day told the world by telegraph that the statement was not an accurate representation of his views, but a speculation upon them ; he added that it had not been published with his knowledge or authority. There can be no doubt, whatever else may be said, that the publication was neither to his advantage, nor in conformity with his view of the crisis.' But he would neither confirm nor deny. The public must wait and see. The subject was one which could only be handled by a responsible Ministry. The bewilderment and confusion of the Liberal party were absolute. No one knew what was coming next ; who was on what side ; or whither his party—or, indeed, himself—was tending. One point only was clear : if Gladstone meant what he seemed to mean, the Irish members would support him, and the Tory Government must be defeated. The new Parliament was opened on January 12, 1886, and never did the House of Commons meet in a condition of livelier or more anxious curiosity. Here we must return to Lawson's narrative.

'I was not in England in the earlier months of 1886 and could only watch the game as an onlooker, but it is true enough that onlookers often see most of the game. Gladstone was about to take his Home Rule plunge. Whether the Irishmen knew how deep, or when, he was going to plunge, I know not ; but I think a little bird had told them something, so that they thought the time had come for overthrowing Salisbury and restoring Gladstone to power. So they took the opportunity of a motion of Jesse Collings'<sup>1</sup> concerning Allotments, commonly

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. Jesse Collings, M.P. for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham.

called the "Three Acres and a Cow" motion. This idea of "Three Acres and a Cow" had been considerably ventilated during the Elections. It was said that people in some of the Eastern Counties had not heard of Mr. Gladstone, but they all knew Jesse Collings. It was also said that to some of the polling-booths men came with halters to lead back the cow. Probably both these rumours were lies. But there is no harm in recording an amusing lie—with proper safeguards. When a child draws a line, it writes under it "This is a line." Just so, under a literary work of imagination it is well to write "This is a lie." Here occurs to me an American story *apropos* of lies. An American mother had been telling her boy the everlasting story about George Washington not telling a lie. When she had finished, he said: "Mama, did you ever tell a lie?" She said: "Oh perhaps, when I was young." Then he said: "Uncle Sam?" "Why perhaps," she said, "he may have been led away." "Aunt Jane?" he said. "Yes possibly once or twice," said the Mother. The boy was silent for a little, and then he said: "Mamma, it must be very lonely in Heaven." "Why, my dear?" "Because there can be nobody there but God and George Washington"!

'No doubt it is possible to be unnecessarily scrupulous, as in the case of a young man who was employed in a newspaper office. The Editor, when engaging him, told him to be very careful of his facts and, if not quite certain of them, to preface his statement with the word "alleged." The Editor was surprised, a day or two afterwards, to see a paragraph beginning—"Alleged Sunday-School Feast at Clapham"!

'These stories have been suggested to me from dealing with fables about Jesse Collings, and under the stories themselves we may probably write—with truth—"These are lies."

'However, Jesse Collings was the hero of the Debate and the Division which gave a majority against the Tory Government and led to its resignation. Then came the formation of

Gladstone's first Home Rule Government. Of the excitement of the Debates and the Parliamentary intrigues of this wonderfully exciting time, as I was not in the House I have nothing to relate which is not probably already known. The great fact was that Gladstone could not carry his party with him in his Home Rule Policy. Hartington would not join his Government at all, and Chamberlain and Trevelyan joined, but very speedily left it. Bright also went strongly against Gladstone. I remember meeting him at the Reform Club a day or two after the decisive Division which threw out the Home Rule Bill, and I remember the kind of shudder which ran through me when, describing the situation, he said something to this effect:—"It looks to me as if Gladstone had looked at the eighty Irish Members and said 'I'll buy them.'"

Afterwards, when the whole bitter Irish fight was in full swing, I used often to converse with him on the question, or rather to listen to his conversation; and one day he said to me: "I like to talk to you—you don't get angry." That was pleasant to hear. But he did not know, though not angry, how pained I was at the attitude which he took up, and at some of the things he said about Ireland. How little we really know of one another! I used to think, in former days, that, if Bright had a fault, it was that he was almost unreasonably devoted to Gladstone. Yet here no sooner did Gladstone crystallize into legislation the principle of liberty, of which Bright has been the noblest and the grandest champion of our day, than he went bitterly against him.

'I have heard that, while the Irish Question was raging, it chanced that both Gladstone and Bright were having their portraits painted by the same eminent painter. He reported—it is said—that in conversation Bright would allude to his old friend Mr. Gladstone, and say that he thought his mind was not quite what it had been; and the next day Mr. Gladstone, kindly alluding to his old friend Mr. Bright, would say that he thought his powers were somewhat failing.



‘What interested me considerably, during the process of the Liberal Home Rule disruption, was that a good number of the men of my acquaintance whom I looked upon as almost too matter-of-course supporters of Gladstone went against him ; while those who I half expected would not be sorry to desert him in a difficulty became his strongest supporters on Home Rule. This corroborates my idea that a man’s character is known only to himself.

‘Why should we faint and fear to live alone,  
 Since all alone, so Heaven has will’d, we die,  
 Nor even the tenderest heart, and next our own,  
 Knows half the reasons why we smile and sigh ?<sup>1</sup>

‘Now came the great General Election of 1886, which rent the Liberal party from top to bottom, and virtually put the Tory Party into power for the next seventeen years. It witnessed the birth of the political organization called Liberal Unionism. Those who gave themselves this name wished it to be understood that they were still Liberals on everything except Mr. Gladstone’s Home Rule policy. I tried my best to find a popular and telling nickname for them, but neither I, nor anyone else, could find a good one, so there was nothing for it but to call them Liberal Unionists.

‘The Tory who had beaten me in 1885 retired and made way for a candidate of this description. He was an excellent County Squire and the Chairman of our local Liberal Association. He had always seemed to me a very good Liberal, but I suppose the common antipathy to the Irish was too strong for him. I think he also had Army proclivities, and I think it is almost as difficult for a soldier to be a Liberal as it is for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. So he stood as a Liberal Unionist, and Hartington was recognized as the leader of these politicians who now went by that name. The attitude of these Liberal Unionists who thought

<sup>1</sup> *The Christian Year.*



themselves friends of freedom always reminds me of the political creed of the American Planter in the days of Slavery—"All men is born free—except niggers." And sometimes in connexion with their attitude the old Cumberland saying recurred to me—"There's good and bad of all sorts, and worse of Irish," which appeared to be their motto.

'Well, the Election for the Cockermouth Division came off with the result that Mr. Curwen, my Liberal Unionist opponent, was beaten by 1,004 votes. I presume that this satisfactory result was mainly owing to the Irish voters. Assuming that they numbered about 500, and that they voted exactly contrary to what they did in 1885 that would just make the Liberal majority.

'To have been beaten by 10 votes in a constituency which within six months gave me a majority of 1,000 was certainly a very remarkable experience.

'The new House assembled in August 1886. We always in the first day of the Session solemnly pass a Standing Order prohibiting Peers from taking part in the election of Members of the House of Commons. When enquired of, all the authorities state that the House has no means whatever of enforcing the order. Bradlaugh on this occasion opposed it, and I seconded him; and for many Sessions after, along with the Right Hon. James Lowther<sup>1</sup> (a curious pair!) took the same course on the opening day. But so dearly does the House love a sham, if it is only old enough, that we never got much support—lots of Members who dearly loved the Lords voting for the Standing Order, thinking, I suppose, that somehow or other they thus showed their independence and Radicalism.

'The intense love of shams is a remarkable feature in human nature; as Biglow writes:—

'For a good old abuse with its roots far and wide  
Is the kind of thing I like to have on my side,  
A Scripture name makes it as sweet as a rose,  
And its tougher the older and uglier it grows.

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for the Isle of Thanet.

‘Three Members in whom I took an interest made their Maiden Speeches this Session (1887).

‘One of the Members to whom I allude was Mr. George Curzon.<sup>1</sup> I find that in my journal I describe it as “pleasant, effective, and successful.” As he was my nephew, I probably tried to view him with severe impartiality; therefore it seems likely that the speech was really a success.

‘Cunninghame-Graham<sup>2</sup> made his Maiden Speech the next night, and it also was a success, as he possessed a vein of original humour, which, however, did not have much weight with the House subsequently. I remember in this Maiden Speech he said solemnly that he thought he was entitled to speak on Ireland, as he was well informed on the subject, having had a long conversation about it with an Irish “bagman.” This “fetched” the House. I suppose because we all felt in our hearts that our knowledge of Ireland was not more than his.

‘My third friend was Sir Edward Grey.<sup>3</sup> I do not seem to have written any comment on his Maiden Speech, but I feel sure it was good, for I do not think that Edward Grey could make a bad speech.

‘A debate which interested me in this Session was one on a motion of Cremer’s<sup>4</sup> in favour of our leaving Egypt—a motion which was, of course, defeated by a large majority. The taking of Egypt (for we have really taken it) was a rascally and dishonourable proceeding; yet, from all accounts, it has been a material success and the people flourish under our rule—at least, so we are told, and in the absence of any testimony to the contrary, the natives not having many facilities for giving their own view of the matter, we must believe it. This reminds me of something that Sir Spencer Walpole says in his History. He describes some gigantic step

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for S.-W. Lancashire; created Lord Curzon of Kedleston 1898.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for N.-W. Lanarkshire.

<sup>3</sup> M.P. for the Berwick Division of Northumberland.

<sup>4</sup> M.P. for Shoreditch.

of fraud or force—probably both—by which we got hold of some part of India and, like an honest man, he condemns the immorality of the proceeding; but then, also like an honest man, he says that the crime succeeded, and he believes the people are the better, more prosperous, etc. for it.

‘There I leave the matter, which makes one think, though one’s thinking does not come to any definite conclusion.

‘During this debate there was a good instance of political cynicism—to name it mildly—in a speech of Sir John Gorst.<sup>1</sup> He admitted that he had said somewhere formerly that “the Prime Minister went to Egypt for the purpose of putting down Parliamentary Government,” but that he said it “when he held an irresponsible position on the other side of the House.” One would have thought that it was possible to be responsible to one’s own conscience, on whichever side one sat.

‘One night during this Session George Curzon asked me to join a dinner party in the House. It consisted of the following besides himself:—Lord Pembroke, Mr. Goschen, Arthur Balfour, St. John Brodrick, Alfred Lyttelton, F. Harris (Editor of the *Saturday Review*), Rider Haggard, and Sutton<sup>2</sup> (a journalist). Looking at what some of the guests became in after-years, the dinner is a little interesting. But I wonder what such a company thought of me. If they had written it down it might have been curious. What I thought of them at the time I need not enter on, but the world thinks a good deal about some of them now (writing in 1903).

‘One day in this Session there was rather an amusing row in connexion with Tim Healy. There was a Tory Member,<sup>3</sup> named De Lisle, who for some reason or other was obnoxious to “the Boys,” as we used to call the Irish Members, and Tim Healy got into a squabble with him and used such language

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. Sir J. E. Gorst, M.P. for Chatham.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Sutherland Sutton (1851–1888), on the staff of the *County Gentleman*.

<sup>3</sup> For Mid-Leicestershire.

on the floor of the House, while a Division was going on, that Courtney, who was in the Chair, had to take notice of it, and Healy was ultimately suspended. In the course of the proceedings he had to make some explanation, and stated himself that he said to De Lisle: "De Lisle, if you will come outside I will break your neck." To this very remarkable invitation it is needless to say that De Lisle did not accede.

'It was during this Session, 1887, that Philip Stanhope<sup>1</sup> one day spoke of Arthur Balfour's "whimsical and lackadaisical mind," an expression that the Speaker ruled to be out of order. The next day Courtney (in the Chair) ruled that to use the word "myrmidons" deprecatingly was also an unparliamentary expression.

'On the 29th of August this year I did rather a good electioneering day's work in connexion with the contest in North Huntingdonshire. I left London in the afternoon, and, as far as I recollect, addressed a small party in a garden, then went on and addressed two more Meetings in school-houses, and ended by speaking in the dark—or by moonlight—to a meeting assembled on some village green; then took train for London, and arrived there in time to vote in the House of Commons which was still sitting, and which did not rise till five minutes to five. This was a terrible Session for late sittings; it being as often as not more morning than evening when we rose.

'There was not much Temperance Legislation this Session, though we did pass a Bill forbidding cider to be paid as part wage—a Bill which was much opposed by those who reckoned cider a kind of Elixir of Life. I suppose some generations will elapse before it is generally recognized that alcohol, under whatever shape, name, or "*alias*," is a source of danger to the public.

'But there was also one rather interesting Temperance Measure, namely Dr. Cameron's<sup>2</sup> Bill for closing Public Houses

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Wednesbury; created Lord Weardale 1906.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for the College Division of Glasgow.



in most parts of Scotland at 10 o'clock. Having got this through the Commons, it went up to the Lords who, after their manner, spoiled it by making it merely Permissive at the discretion of the Magistrates. This seemed such a trifling measure—as we did not believe in the least that the Magistrates would adopt it—that Dr. Cameron and I agreed that it was not worth going on with. However, Mark Stewart<sup>1</sup> took it up and carried it through the Commons with the Lords' Amendments. Now, note what happened, for it is a good lesson to those “of little faith,” as Dr. Cameron and I were on this occasion.

‘The Magistrates in virtually every County in Scotland have put the Act in force with great advantage to the public.

‘Often do I think of this result when my friends assure me that if the people themselves had the power to get rid of Liquor-Shops they would never use it. I will not fall into the error of prophesying, but I have my own ideas on that subject. At any rate, I think the people themselves are quite as likely to curtail the Drink-Trade as are Benches of Scottish magistrates.

‘In December of 1887 I made a short visit to Ireland, and within the zone of the Eviction excitement. But I do not think that I acquired any especial learning on the Irish Question. It is not at all strange that the question is a perpetual stumbling-block and rock of offence in our political manœuvres. The only people who understand it are (naturally) the Irish Members, and they are studiously prevented from dealing with it.

‘At Enniskillen we addressed the people from a wagonette in a snowstorm. We had drawn up in a Square near the gaol, and while I was speaking I happened to spy my old friend Mr. Jeremiah Jordan, M.P.<sup>2</sup> (almost, I believe, the only Methodist Home Ruler), cowering from the storm under the porch of the gaol. This gave me an opportunity of saying

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Kirkcubrightshire.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for West Clare.

that he ought to be inside instead of outside. This mild joke was approved of by the audience. Then we dined at the Hotel—the priest of the place being one of the diners. He sat next me, and by and by asked me what post I filled in the Government. Whereupon, John Ellis, M.P.,<sup>1</sup> who was on the other side of me, very nearly fell off his chair with laughter. But this was another illustration of how little the two nations understood one another. What Englishman could have conceived for a moment of me in the Government!

‘When the Session of 1888 opened on February 9 the raids on, and captures of, Irish Members were in pretty active operation. There was an Irish Member named Gilhooly,<sup>2</sup> small of stature, physically of a weak type, and most inoffensive to look at. He, however, had done something in Ireland of a culpable nature, and was “wanted” by the Irish Police. He had managed somehow to get into the House, and there he could not be arrested. But when the House rose a number of us who knew what was coming escorted him to the gate of Palace Yard where the Police pounced upon him amid a small crowd who had collected. Someone shouted out—“Read the warrant,” whereupon the arrester by the light of a lantern went through that form. I well remember what a roar of laughter there was when the words were read in the warrant that this most harmless, diminutive, and good-natured little man was charged with “*intimidating*” the Police or somebody or other.

‘This Session, as usual, was chiefly Ireland. On February 17 there was rather a fine scene. Gladstone had made one of his grandest Irish speeches (what he said I do not now remember), which so worked on the Irishmen and the Opposition that when he sat down that side of the House rose, and, waving their hats, cheered for some minutes—a most unusual incident in the House of Commons.

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for the Rushcliffe Division of Notts.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for West Cork.

‘ A great feature of the Session was Ritchie’s Local Government Bill, which I find I describe in my *Parliamentary Journal* as being “ democratic in theory, and rather going on the principle of disestablishing everybody, except the Publican.” This was not a very bad summary, as it became apparent very shortly that one object of the Bill was absolutely to *establish* the Publican by an ingenious scheme for compensating him when he could not get a renewal of his licence ; a plan which, when understood in the country, caused a tremendous and ultimately successful opposition to this “ dark and sinuous ” project.

‘ I might here go into the history of the anti-compensation agitation, but it would occupy too much space. I will only say that it was really encouraging to see how soon the people *understood* and resented this scheme for the confiscation of public money to enrich brewers and publicans.

‘ After all, Ignorance may be “ the Mother of Devotion,” but it is certainly the mother of political robbery and jobbery. Why—this very confiscation scheme was supported by the Government on the plea that it would promote Temperance. But for once that was going too far, and common sense and common justice carried the day. Still, I think that most Statesmen are of the same creed as Lowell’s “ Pious Editor,” who says :

‘ In short, I firmly do believe  
     In Humbug generally,  
 For it’s a thing that I perceive  
     To have a solid “ vally ” ;  
 This hath my faithful shepherd been,  
     In pastures sweet hath led me,  
 And this will keep the people green  
     To feed as they have fed me.

‘ Rather a remarkable Parliamentary incident was the carrying unanimously on April 23 of Mr. Alexander McArthur’s<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Leicester.

Resolution condemning the sale of drink to native races. I said to myself: "How can I get the House to understand that we are all 'natives' of some place or other, and that drink, being 'no respecter of persons,' makes slaves of every nationality, when it gets an entrance?" But I know that such ideas are shocking—almost blasphemous—to the respectable moderate drinker who proudly says that such is his self-control that he "can either take it or want it." A friend of mine says that this is quite true of the Moderate Drinkers for "they are always either taking it or wanting it."

'Very interesting during this Session was the Debate on the Channel Tunnel. Gladstone made one of his most beautiful speeches in its favour. The argument seemed to me to be all on one side, but the militarism, and jingoism, and folly generally, which pervade "Society" carried all before them, and we were beaten by nearly two to one.

'Query, where could the French army be in a position to do us less harm than in a hole at the bottom of the sea? Some day, when we are all dead and gone and the Tunnel is made, how idiotic will all these frantic fears appear to those who come after us! Strange to say, on this occasion Randolph Churchill went against the Tunnel.

'The most momentous and exciting business of the Session of 1888 was doubtless the Parnell Commission—a matter too big to be dealt with in detail. My only comment on it is that it was about the most unfair political move which I ever saw made.

'Parnell was accused of having written a letter favouring murder. He denied it, and in ordinary circumstances the word of a Member of Parliament would have been accepted; or, if there were unusual circumstances, a Committee of the House might have been appointed to enquire into the case. After some manœuvres, the course of an enquiry was adopted, but instead, of a Parliamentary Committee, a Commission of three Judges was appointed to enquire, not only into the letter, but into the relation of the Irish Members with outrages



in Ireland. Everyone knows how this prolonged enquiry ended in the conviction and subsequent suicide of the letter-forger, and the half-and-half exculpation of the Irish Members. My comment is that I rather wonder the Government were able to find three Judges (and the three they chose were men of great worth and eminence) to be their instruments in carrying out this "dirty trick."

'The first part of this Session of this year ended on August 13 to recommence business on November 6.

'Just about the time the House was reassembling Mr. Gladstone made one of his triumphal progresses to Birmingham and the Black Country. I heard his great speech at Birmingham, and when he sat down it seemed as though the people would never stop cheering. I timed them, and, though I have lost the memorandum which I made, I am sure it was over five minutes.<sup>1</sup> They never do things by halves at Birmingham. He had spoken for about two hours. The next day I was staying in the same house as Mr. Gladstone, for the only time that I ever did so; and, by way of making conversation, I said: "You did not seem to use the mixture which I have seen you take from a small phial when speaking in the House of Commons." "No," he said, "I only take that when I make a *long* speech."

'During this visit, the report came one morning of Lord Salisbury's speech at the Lord Mayor's Banquet, in which he had spoken to the effect that wars are not got up by Governments, but by the peoples. This excited Mr. Gladstone very much, and he declared that it was incorrect, and that it was the Governments and not the peoples by whom wars were promoted. I have often since thought of this remark, and the terrible experiences of the Boer War—a war which the British nation seemed to revel in simply because it was a war—has made me doubt whether Mr. Gladstone's

<sup>1</sup> Sir Joseph Pease (M.P. for the Barnard Castle Division of Durham) left it on record that he timed the cheering, and it lasted for nine minutes.

view was the correct one. Man seems to me to be the most savage of all beasts of the field.

‘It was during this visit that Mr. Gladstone once came down to breakfast when we had all finished. We remained sitting there, and he at once began to dilate on all sorts of things in his own unrivalled and entrancing manner. Among other things, I well remember his telling us how, years before, he had made a speech in defence of some measure of Army Reform, detailing to us a number of the great benefits which he prophesied would arise from it, and then saying loudly and with a crash of his hand on the table: “Not one of which has come to pass!”’

‘A rather comical incident occurred one night during this Autumn Session of 1888. There was a contested Election in Holborn—the Candidates being Lord Compton (Liberal) and Mr. Bruce (Tory). We were all anxiously waiting in and about the House for the announcement of the numbers. At last it came—Compton at the head of the Poll. Then arose from the Liberal benches a tumult of triumphant cheering—in delight at the unexpected news. But scarcely had we time to get our breath before news came contradicting the first report, and announcing that Bruce was in by a majority of 965. Whereupon, the Tories repeated our performance of the minute before.

‘It was during this Session that I asked Mr. W. H. Smith one day whether the Government would not negotiate with the Tribes around Suakin with a view to prevent fighting; to which he replied suggesting that “*I might send someone to negotiate with those gentlemen.*”’

‘Disraeli once said about him: “Is it Mr. W. H. or H. W. Smith? I never can remember which.” But, whichever it was, it seemed to me that there was the astuteness of many Smiths concentrated in this capable old leader of the House.

‘On the first night of the Session 1889 I was walking up

from the House for dinner along with Edmund Robertson,<sup>1</sup> the Member for Dundee, when he observed: "I am about tired of this Session." Suggestive. It was indeed much like all the Sessions which we held under the reign of the overwhelming Tory Majority which, naturally enough, took most of the go and vitality out of our ordinary proceedings.

'It was during this Session that a start was made with what may be called the champion legislative folly—the Sugar Convention. Shortly, the policy of this extraordinary measure was to prevent cheap sugar coming into this country. Certain Governments gave bonuses, or drawbacks, or subsidies, to their sugar-growers when they exported the produce to other countries, England among the rest. These bonuses were, of course, paid by their own subjects, while we got the benefit of cheaper sugar. Our Government thought it ought to make arrangements which would stop these bonuses and consequently increase the price which we had to pay for sugar. I have often weighed in my mind which were the most ridiculous—the Governments who paid this bonus, or the Government which refused to receive it.

'This question came up on the Address, and Baron de Worms<sup>2</sup> advocated his plan, but was answered most ably by Mr. Allison, the Member for North Cumberland, who never spoke unless he had something to say, and who represented North Cumberland for fifteen years, and was then turned out by a large majority because he could not, like his fellow-Christians, applaud the shooting of Boers.

'I got an invitation to go one night to a meeting of Londoners who supported this Sugar Convention, and such a set I never did behold. They looked to me as though they took more interest in alcohol than in sugar, and their ignorant talk was of the most futile description. My friend Mr. Picton, M.P.,<sup>3</sup> was with me, and when we left, he said: "Now you can see why London returns so many Tories." They

<sup>1</sup> Created Lord Lochee 1908.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for East Liverpool. <sup>3</sup> M.P. for Leicester.



were just the sort of people to be influenced by the kind of talk alluded to by Lowell, where he says :

‘Parson Wilbur, he calls all these arguments lies,  
Says they’re nothing on earth but just “fee faw fum,”  
And that all this big talk of our destinies  
Is one half of it ignorance, t’other half rum.

‘One night I supported Harcourt at a meeting in St. James’s Hall to oppose this marvellous Sugar-policy, but it was infected by the sort of people whom I have mentioned above, who shouted and fought tumultuously for a long time before they could be overcome by those who wished to hear. I remember saying to Harcourt, while the row was proceeding, that it seemed rather serious ; but he said it was rather pleasant to see that our people had any pluck.

‘This Sugar-policy had to be abandoned this Session and was not successfully carried out until fourteen years later, when we may assume that the nation had become rather more foolish and flabby and ready to be operated upon for the benefit of the ‘interests.’

‘It was rather interesting to see John Wilson,<sup>1</sup> the leader of the Temperance Party in Scotland, take his seat escorted by Trevelyan on one side, and on the other by Brown who in the House in 1886 had turned Trevelyan out in the Hawick Boroughs. So kaleidoscopic are politics.

‘Ireland, as usual, contributed all that was picturesque in the House, and very picturesque was the scene when Parnell on March 1 rose to speak on the Address, when almost all one side of the House stood up to cheer him. He remained perfectly cool and unimpassioned, and might have been made of ice. The demonstration was caused by his having just been acquitted by the Commission of having had anything to do with the famous letter. When one thinks of Parnell’s political end a few years later, one says involuntarily “How

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for the Govan Division of Lanarkshire.



are the mighty fallen!" than which common-place exclamation I think there can be nothing more appropriate. That same evening when the House rose, we escorted Dr. Tanner<sup>1</sup> to his arrest in Palace Yard as we had done Gilhooly on a former occasion. The same kind of scene was repeated, only Tanner was allowed to go to the Westminster Palace Hotel, from a window of which he made us a speech, and was then arrested in the Smoking-room. I wonder whether there are any other Legislative Assemblies where the members are treated in this way. But John Bull cares nothing how ridiculous and objectionable anything may be, if it is only done in the sacred cause of bullying Ireland.

'As every conceivable topic was discussed on the Address, I tried to get in something on the Drink-Laws, but this the Speaker<sup>2</sup> sternly repressed. I always thought he was particularly strict in keeping to the very letter of the law to prevent such Liquor-discussions, and I mention it because in later years—after he had presided over the Drink-Commission—he became one of the most earnest and able denouncers of our Drink-Laws. Moral: Never despair of anyone. Nevertheless, it was probably my own stupidity (not being an Irishman) which prevented my finding some Parliamentary method of circumventing the precision of the Speaker.

'On the 27th of March, 1889, John Bright died, and I attended his funeral at Rochdale a few days after. All was conducted with Quaker simplicity and solemnity. Some day one hopes that a Life worthy of him may be written. My admiration and affection for him was great, so much so that I feel any comments of mine on his life and character might be thought to come from a prejudiced source. But I think that very truly might be applied to him the lines:

'Ne'er to those chambers where the mighty rest,  
Since their foundation, came a nobler guest.

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Mid-Cork.

<sup>2</sup> The Right Hon. A. W. Peel; created Viscount Peel 1893.

But there is something connected with Bright's life and work, which (writing fourteen years after his death) throws a curious light on what I may call "political human nature."

'The success of Free Trade (of which he and Cobden were the pioneers and apostles) seemed to be one of the few things which our English experience has made manifest to all men. If anyone had asked me whether I ever expected to have seriously to defend Free Trade, I should have looked on my questioner as being frivolous of the frivolous.

'Yet now (writing in the beginning of 1904) we are in the midst of a "tearing, raging propaganda" for a return to Protection; emphasized by exactly the same misstatements, false prophecies, and fallacies as did duty sixty years ago. I suppose the Controversy will have been settled one way or other before these pages appear, but, whatever may be the decision, the very fact of the revival of Protection seems to me to be an amazing incident. Is it not Pope who writes?—

'Truth crushed to earth shall rise again.

But it seems to me that Error crushed to earth picks itself up even more briskly. From all which one is led to quote another hackneyed saying: "The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance."

'It was during this Session (1889) that Chaplin and Mr. Samuel Smith<sup>1</sup> had a great field night on Bimetallism. Such debates are very puzzling and mystifying. Having heard some of them, I have, however, come to the conclusion that Major Rasch's definition of Bimetallism is the correct one. He said "Bimetallism means taking a florin and calling it half a crown."

'One night Labouchere got an opportunity of moving a Resolution against the House of Lords and was only in a minority of forty-one. What I remember best of the Debate

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Flintshire.

was a speech of Lord Cranborne,<sup>1</sup> the quaintness and unconnectedness of which convulsed the House. I recall one sentence in which he said: "That a man is the son of his father is the basis of modern society." I could not make out whether the remark was *intended* to instruct or to amuse. If the latter, it was very successful.

'A Scotch Local Government Bill afforded great scope for the speeches of Scotch Members during this Session. It was stated that one of the most painstaking and indefatigable of these gentlemen made forty-nine speeches on this Bill in one evening! I am often reminded, when listening to Debates in the House of Commons, of the text which mentions those persons "who think they shall be heard for their much speaking."

'In this Session Trevelyan, in his pleasing and literary and picturesque style, moved a Resolution virtually recommending that Parliament should sit more in the Winter and less in the Summer. He was only beaten by four. Probably the shooters and hunters turned the scale against him, for true is the old saying that, when an Englishman gets up and looks out of the window, his first remark is: "It is a fine day; what shall we kill?"

'During the Easter Recess in this Session (1890) I went down to help Lloyd-George<sup>2</sup> at a bye-Election in the Carnarvon Boroughs, and a fine time we had;—a great feature in the Welsh contests being the singing. There was one song of which, being in Welsh, I did not, of course, understand a word, except the finale which was always "George and Gladstone," sung with tremendous emphasis and which rang in my head for days and days afterwards. Almost the only Liberal Member besides myself who came down to help George was

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for the Darwen Division of Lancashire; became Marquis of Salisbury 1903.

<sup>2</sup> Chancellor of the Exchequer 1908.

Mr. Acland,<sup>1</sup> whose wife also joined gloriously in the singing. In spite, however, of scant help, Lloyd-George was returned by a majority of eighteen.

"It was rather interesting to me that his Maiden Speech—and a very good one—was made in opposition to the Government's Compensation policy later in the year.

"That policy was tried again this Session for the second time by the Government, and again great opposition arose throughout the country, telling on the Divisions in the House. One afternoon we managed to take a division very early, thinking it a favourable occasion when many of the Tory "Pro-Brewers" were away at Epsom or some race-meeting. We all but succeeded, though the racers, having hurried back by train, rushed upstairs in time to beat us by four. It was said that on this occasion Lord Hartington was seen to run to get in ere the door was shut. But the evidence on this point is doubtful, and, as no one ever saw him run before or since, I should think the statement is inaccurate. A "Whip" which was sent out to the Opposition that morning showed so much tact that I think it is worth reproducing:—

"House of Commons: June 18, 1890.

"Dear Sir,—We hope it may be convenient to be in attendance at the House of Commons as early as possible to-morrow (Thursday) afternoon. It is feared that the attractions of Ascot may diminish the attendance of Members, and we therefore venture to urge upon you to be without fail in your place.

"Yours faithfully,

"PHILIP STANHOPE.

"WILLIAM MCARTHUR."<sup>2</sup>

'After the whole thing had been pretty well maimed

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. A. H. D. Acland, M.P. for the Rotherham Division of Yorkshire.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for the St. Austell Division of Cornwall.



and mangled, the ingenious and indefatigable Tim Healy discovered that the plan of the Government for dealing with the money was unconstitutional, and they had to drop it. This was no doubt annoying to the Government, as Liquordom is the corner-stone of Toryism; but, if the Tory leaders can show "The Trade" that they are trying to do the best they can for them, they can still be sure of their votes. What results we should see, if any combination for doing good would organize and work as hard for doing good as the Trade does for evil.

'One day, during the Compensation controversy, they had a Petition rolled into the House, in the shape of an immense cylinder; which, when placed on the floor, prevented the Members on the lowest benches from seeing one another across the House.

'Of course, what was called the Parnell crisis overshadowed a great part of the Session of 1890. If I should try here to deal with it, I should not know where to begin or where to end. Shortly, however, Mr. Parnell got into a disreputable scrape which enraged the English people, of whom "unctuous rectitude" is—according to Mr. Rhodes—a leading characteristic. This seemed to Mr. Gladstone to make his political co-operation with Parnell not practical politics. This in turn enraged Parnell, who lost more than half his Parliamentary following, after a discussion on the subject, in a Committee-room upstairs, which lasted for weeks and which for ability and eloquence has seldom been surpassed in the annals of debating.

'I believe Mr. Gladstone said that the whole thing was the most extraordinary political event that had ever happened. If he did say so, I think he was right. The stars in their courses seem to fight against Ireland. Something or other always happens, just when success seems to be in view.

'An interesting event in the beginning of the Session of 1891 was the unanimous expunging from the records of the

House of the old Resolution forbidding Bradlaugh to take the oath. Bradlaugh was to have moved this himself, but when the day came was lying on his death-bed. He always struck me as a man of very great intellectual power and a very useful Member of Parliament. The Bradlaugh incident was a very strange one. The Tories lived on it for some years, and it was a splendid weapon for them to fight the battle of ignorance, bigotry, and privilege.

‘Hardly anything was finer in Gladstone’s career than the way in which he stood up for Bradlaugh’s rights. His opinions I imagine that he detested, but he thoroughly recognized that a man’s opinions were no ground for treating him with injustice. On this very point he made in this Session a speech on allowing Roman Catholics to hold the offices of Lord Chancellor, and Viceroy of Ireland, and it was generally admitted to be one of the finest speeches which he ever made.

‘One night we had rather an interesting Debate on opening Museums on Sunday, which always seemed to me to be a rational step—not because I believed in the theory that stuffed monkeys would have a very elevating effect on the community, but because I thought that, Public Museums belonging to the public, it was only right that they should be able to enjoy them on the day when they had most time to do so. Of course, we were beaten; for at that time there was a great feeling against such a step, which was opposed by many pious persons who seemed to see no harm in Public Houses being open on Sunday. Some lines were written, supposed to express the views of one of these excellent persons, as follows—

‘The Sunday I hold a Divine institution,  
And an integral part of our old constitution.  
Against its observance this Motion offends,  
It should be kept strictly for “spirituous” ends,  
And so, Mr. Speaker, whoever attack us,  
We’ll keep it intact for the worship of Bacchus.

‘Strange to say, during this Session Sir Joseph Pease carried a Motion against Opium by a majority of 30. A day or two after Sir Lepel Griffin, who is considered a great Indian authority, wrote of “the 160 geese who formed the majority on Tuesday—a scratch majority representing the opinion of that part of the population of England which is still outside the walls of a lunatic asylum—acting for their own selfish vanity,” etc. Yet, some years after, I read that a distinguished, influential, and literary man in China had written there a book called “China’s only Hope,” by which he meant that the prohibition of the sale and use of opium was China’s only chance of real good. Yet no doubt multitudes of people in England would think Lepel Griffin’s remarks very admirable.

‘This Session we carried the Second Reading of an Irish Sunday Closing Bill by a majority of about 8 to 1. Very instructive was it to see Parnell and Sexton *virtually* impeding the Bill. One could guess what their motive was. Some years after this, one of the ablest Irish Members assured me that in Ireland the Liquor-power was stronger than the Catholic Church.

‘This year we got Free Education. No one can tell what you may not get from a Tory Government—at the right time. Only 10 good old Tories could be found to vote against it—amongst them our Member for Mid-Cumberland, Mr. J. W. Lowther.<sup>1</sup> An Irish Land Bill took up an enormous amount of time—there being 122 Divisions on it during the Session.

‘A Tithes Bill also occupied very much time.

‘One afternoon I was taken away to a Queen’s Garden Party, and so—most unfortunately—missed a curious and instructive Division. It was on this wise and in Supply. The vote really was for or against maintaining the Drinking-Bar in the Lobby at the entrance to the House. Thus it was a kind of Local Veto vote.

‘No less than 55 voted “con.” but 127 “pro.”

<sup>1</sup> Elected Speaker 1905.



‘An ex-Cabinet Minister voted against the Bar, and on some surprise being expressed, he said: “Ah! I have seen more than one or two of our own ‘Whips’ ruined by that Bar.” When, I wonder, will the people be allowed to vote for the abolition of what ruins themselves and their neighbours?’

‘I believe, moreover, that it was owing to this discussion and Division that the said Bar was soon after removed a little way off, placed out of sight, and I have been told (though of this I am not certain) with a very good result in the diminution of its alcoholic business.

‘In the Autumn of 1891 Mr. Parnell and Mr. W. H. Smith died within a few hours of one another. Two more different political characters could not be imagined. Mr. Smith gained, and honourably gained, his position by common sense and hard work. How Parnell became the greatest political power of his day was always to me a considerable puzzle, and I doubt whether even the Irishmen could explain it quite satisfactorily. But I suppose the great thing was that he knew what he wanted, which it seems to me that very few politicians do exactly know. But, of course, he must really have had other very great qualities, besides that.

‘Early in 1892 two great notabilities died: Mr. Spurgeon and Cardinal Manning. I have previously given my impressions of Spurgeon. Like everyone who heard him I was impressed by his sermons, but, as in the case of Parnell, I never quite understood the reason of his immense popularity.

‘Cardinal Manning’s death I felt as a great loss. Hardly anyone dealt with the awful drink-problem more forcibly, more clearly, and more logically than he did. I believe it is quite true that at one time he knew little or nothing of the ruin worked by the Liquor-Trade. But he consented to receive a deputation or visit from friends of the “Alliance.” He was convinced by their facts and arguments, and, till the day of his death, fought undauntedly for the emancipation of



the Nation from the thralldom of Drink. He used to tell a story of his seeing one of his flock a little the worse for drink (by the way did anybody ever see anyone "the better for drink"?)—he began reasoning with him, and by and bye urged the man to take the pledge, saying that he himself had done so, on which the man, looking archly at him, said: "And likely your Reverence stood in need of it"!

'I find in my Journal for 1892 an account of a Welsh Dis-establishment debate in which I say that Sir Edward Clarke,<sup>1</sup> in his treatment of the subject, was "saintly and silly." I transcribe this because it seems to describe the attitude which defenders of the Establishment generally used to assume. Political piety always used to seem to me rather grotesque in the House of Commons. Of course, I mean by piety denominational assumption. I read somewhere of an old lady who had led a beautiful life and was beloved by all who knew her. In talking of her life, she said: "I never had much piety, but I always had principles. Piety without principles makes the Company-Promoter." That seemed to me to portray the present position of this nation. Any amount of preaching, Church- and Chapel-building, and "Defending of the Faith"—but a general neglect of the rules of right and wrong in dealing with other nations, or indeed in dealing among ourselves.

'During this Session of 1892 the House seemed to be much amused one night by my supporting Mr. Webster<sup>2</sup>—a double-dyed Tory—in his proposition to do away with the "Illiterate Voter." I believe myself that the Illiterate Voter is a fraud—something like the "*Bona Fide* traveller." Even though a man cannot read or write, he can be told by his friends where to put his cross on a ballot-paper. If he cannot understand that he is a kind of idiot, and the Law ought to be called one for the assistance of "Idiots"—not "Illiterates." Of course we did not carry the Resolution, but I still think there is

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Plymouth.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for East St. Pancras.

no good reason for encouraging *avowed* idiots to go to the Poll.

‘ It was during this Session that I defeated the motion for the Derby Adjournment by a majority of 14. Lord Elcho,<sup>1</sup> who had supported the Adjournment on the last occasion, speaking against it this time. The result was rather funny, for when the House met next day, as nobody expected any business, there was not a quorum, and the House rose at 4 P.M., having done nothing. But we killed this senseless and vulgar system of adjournment all the same.

‘ At the end of June 1892 came the Dissolution. I was returned again for the Cocker-mouth Division by a reduced majority, beating Major Napier, a rollicking sort of good fellow, not knowing much about politics apparently, but the sort of Candidate whom the Tories like.’

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Ipswich.

## CHAPTER IX

## THE LIBERAL RALLY

THE General Election of 1886 had been fought on a single and simple issue. Was Ireland to have Home Rule? The answer was a sufficiently emphatic No; but, for two or three years, the Liberal party continued to bestow all its energies on the prosecution of this very unpopular cause. By degrees the more prudent Liberals arrived at the conclusion that the English electors could scarcely be expected to vote for a party which offered them nothing; and that even the disinterested support of the Scotch and Welsh might be withdrawn if the national aspirations of Scotland and Wales were persistently disregarded. The Liberal Leaders therefore formulated a vast and variegated scheme of political and social reforms, which, as having been promulged at a meeting of the National Liberal Federation at Newcastle, was nicknamed 'The Newcastle Programme.' It contained such explosive items as Scotch and Welsh Disestablishment, Local Control of the Liquor-Traffic, Reform of the House of Lords, Reform of the Registration Laws, and Payment of Members.

It was believed that to some of these projects Gladstone had yielded only a reluctant assent; and certainly all his zeal and energy and perseverance—miraculous at eighty-two—were directed to the one end of securing a national verdict in favour of Home Rule. The first Session of 1892 was short and uneventful. Everyone knew that a dissolution

was at hand, and Gladstone, in an article in the 'Nineteenth Century,'<sup>1</sup> had proved, very much to his own satisfaction, that the Liberal majority could not be less than 100. Lord Salisbury, having no constituents to harangue, addressed an allocution to 'The Electors of the United Kingdom,' praying that they might 'be guided to shrink from this great outrage on liberty, on gratitude, and on good faith'—in other words, that they might again refuse the demand for Home Rule.

Parliament was dissolved on June 28, 1892, and the result of the General Election was a majority of forty for Home Rule. It was composed of Irish, Scotch, Welsh, and English members; and the bond which united them was obviously fragile. On the first day of the new Session the Conservative Leader—Mr. Balfour—remarked to his Liberal opponents, with perfect truth, 'Your troubles are just beginning.'

Here Lawson resumes his narrative :

'On August 8, we commenced a full dress debate on a vote of No Confidence in the Government, very ably moved by Asquith, and our majority was exactly 40. It so happened that the Tories had not got their men down so early as they should have done on the last night of debate, so to fill up time Chaplin talked from the Treasury Bench "against time" for nearly three-quarters of an hour. This I thought rather a chivalrous feat. I never talked against time in my life and it must be a hateful business, but it is one of the weapons of Parliamentary warfare and requires cleverness so as to keep in order and circumvent the Speaker, and also pluck to stand the jeering, interruption, and opposition of the suffering listeners.

'I now come to the memorable Session of 1893.

'There was an incident at the commencement of it which rather interested me. Michael Davitt, standing against the

<sup>1</sup> For September 1891.



Parnellite candidate, won the seat at South Meath, but was unseated on the ground of priestly intimidation. It seems strange that, while Priests of all persuasions, Protestant as well as Catholic, are employed as their principal business to declare to those whom they can influence that punishment will fall upon them if they do certain things, they are not to be allowed to announce punishment as the result of giving certain votes which they deem wrong. In my view, political action is one of the most important of a man's duties, and why is his spiritual adviser not to assist him in deciding what action he ought to take? This may be called "superstition," "priestcraft," and all the rest of it. All right, but that does not make it clear to me that you should interfere with freedom of opinion, and freedom of expression of opinion, at an election more than at any other time. I am not doubting that the Priests have what I should consider a most mischievous and ridiculous influence over the people. But because the people are grossly ignorant and superstitious that is not a sufficient reason—to my mind—for proscribing the teaching of their spiritual pastors at Election times.

‘Early in this Session (1893) Col. Saunderson<sup>1</sup> one night called one of these priests “a murderous ruffian,” but after a great row altered it to “an excited politician.” Such are parliamentary niceties. On one occasion Disraeli had to defend the Irish Church and, as the manner of his speech clearly showed, he had indulged in an excess of stimulant. When Mr. Gladstone came to reply, he merely alluded to the right honourable gentleman's “heated imagination.”

‘Mr. Gladstone introduced his Home Rule Bill on February 13, but he did not get the Second Reading carried—by a majority of 43—until April 21. Into the incidents and arguments of that great Debate I will not enter, as I should not know where to begin or where to end. I will only say that

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for North Armagh.

Gladstone, as usual, appeared to me to be almost superhuman in these fights.

‘On February 23 a number of very kind friends presented Lady Lawson with a portrait of myself, and the presentation took place at the Mansion-House. When Sydney Smith had his portrait painted, he complained that the artist had not thrown into his features sufficient hostility to the Irish Church Establishment. I do not know whether sufficient hostility to the Drink-Trade has been infused into mine, but everyone seemed to think that the artist in this case—a son of my old friend Dr. Dawson Burns—had produced a very good likeness. I suppose it will remain for years to show my successors what a “gloomy fanatic”—as the Liquor-Papers call me—was like.

‘Continually, when I look at pictures of those who are gone, the lines of Byron on the picture-gallery recur to me—

‘There were the painted forms of other times,  
 ’Twas all they left of virtues or of crimes,  
 Save vague tradition ; and the gloomy vaults  
 That hid their dust, their foibles, and their faults ;  
 And half a column of the pompous page  
 That speeds the specious tale from age to age ;  
 Where History’s pen its praise or blame supplies,  
 And lies like truth, and still most truly lies.

‘Of course, in Committee the Home Rule Bill was fought line by line and word by word. Why this was done one hardly knows, as there was always looming in the background the House of Lords, which everybody knew would never pass a Home Rule Bill, unless through fear of a revolution. The fact of the Lords being in the background makes most of our proceedings in the Commons—bar financial ones—more or less of a sham. But an Englishman dearly loves shams. He boasts of his love for Civil and Religious Equality, and steadily keeps up a State Church which Bishop Magee

declared was "based on religious inequality." He professes to love peace, but cheerfully pays any amount to keep up the "bloated armaments" without which there can be no wars. He goes to Church twice on Sundays to pray for the leading of a godly, righteous, and sober life, and on week-days votes for law-makers who will send 130,000 Traders out for no other object than to promote drinking. And he will boast of the "British Constitution, glorious Institution," based on the free and independent votes of its citizens, and all the while will fall down, to worship and support an Assembly of Hereditary Legislators, who by their irresponsible veto can block the legislation demanded by millions of citizens.

'One sometimes feels inclined to doubt whether there is any use in arguing a question with such people. But I need not moralize, which does not do much good except relieving one's feelings (like "swearing at large"), but must get on with the Session.

'One night in Committee on the Home Rule Bill there was a tremendous row which raged for about an hour arising from Brodrick<sup>1</sup> having somewhere and at some time described the Irish Members as "impecunious and garrulous." This they certainly are, but there is no harm whatever in being "impecunious," and not much harm in being "garrulous." From the etymology of Parliament we know that it is a place in which to talk, indeed it is called by those who esteem it lightly a "Talking-Shop." These incidents I relate now and then, as they throw some light on the nature of the House of Commons, and show also the truth of the text which says: "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth."

'But now I come to another matter which to this day I look back on with the greatest distaste and disgust. But it was historical, and as time goes on those who were actually "in it" are fast departing, so that the record of an eye-witness

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. W. St. John Brodrick, M.P. for the Guildford Division of Surrey; became Viscount Midleton 1907.



may be of some value. On June 27, 1893, it had been decided that at 10 o'clock certain parts of the Home Rule Bill should be put to the vote without further debate. In Parliamentary slang this is called the Guillotine. Just before 10 o'clock Chamberlain took the opportunity of making a remarkably bitter speech, comparing Gladstone to Herod. To this T. P. O'Connor<sup>1</sup> responded by calling Chamberlain "Judas," a name which in moments of excitement the Irish Members were fond of applying to him. This caused irritation, and when at 10 o'clock the final division under the "Guillotine" was being prepared for, the House was in a very turbulent and bitter mood. Amid the noise Mr. Vicary Gibbs<sup>2</sup> was understood to be shouting out a protest against the "Judas" nomenclature, but the Chairman took no notice of him. Then a Liberal Member straying past the front Opposition Bench was somewhat rudely desired from the Tory Benches to keep to his own side of the House. Resenting this, he sat down on the front Opposition bench and immediately received a push from one of its occupants. I need not record his name, though I have seldom seen him since without remembering that he was the first man for generations who had resorted to physical force in the House. I did not absolutely see myself *everything* that I have just described, but I think my account is pretty accurate, and the above mentioned front bench man wrote to the papers afterwards describing the pushing business and saying with reference to it: "Then the row began." And so it did.

'I was sitting quietly on one of the benches behind the Treasury bench when suddenly I saw Members on the other side springing to their feet, leaping over the benches, and striking at one another. It seemed to me like a hideous dream. Yet I cannot say that I saw any one Member hit another, though I remember seeing Colonel Saunderson hit out

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for the Scotland Division of Liverpool.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for Mid-Hertfordshire.



freely from the shoulder, though whether he actually struck anyone I do not know. My impression was that most of the Irishmen joined in the row simply because it was a row.

‘That reminds one of a story which the present Lord Rathmore (David Plunket)<sup>1</sup> told once in a speech. He said that it is not Irish etiquette for a stranger to interfere in a Faction Fight, but only in a Free Fight. He said a fight was going on in a street one day when an Irishman asked a bystander whether it was a free fight or a faction fight, and on being told that it was a free fight he instantly rushed into it shouting “Glory, Hallelujah” and brandishing his shillelagh with the best of them.

‘The whole thing in the House was over in a minute or two, and I should be sorry to be called on to say whether the Tory Opposition or the Irishmen were the most to blame. I feel sure, however, that there was not an English Member, and I fancy not an Irish one either who, when all was over, did not feel sorry and ashamed at what had occurred. The end of it was that the Speaker was sent for and, after hearing a statement of what had occurred, he said and did the right thing in his usual admirable manner and restored peace, enabling us to go through the “Guillotine” division. Not much more was heard of this serious incident in the House, for, though it was once brought up, the Speaker was evidently in favour of the thing being dropped, and indeed this was perhaps best, for to try and forget the disgrace was as desirable as anything. Nevertheless, I never can forget it. For it destroyed the pleasing idea that one belonged to a Legislative Assembly superior to all the Legislatures in the world in *never* having been involved in personal encounter. Even now, looking at the deplorable incident, one cannot help thinking “how are the mighty fallen!”

‘I wonder how history will treat this affair and whether it will put it in a different light from what I have done. As I

<sup>1</sup> Then M.P. for the University of Dublin.

have said above, the only value of my narrative is that I have described some things which I saw with my own eyes.

‘ One night during this Session, 1893, when the South African Company was being discussed, Labouchere described them as “ a wretched, rotten, bankrupt set of marauders and murderers.” Strong language, but not so forcible as Montgomery’s lines describing a freebooting band of old :

‘ A rabid race, fanatically bold,  
And steeled to cruelty by lust of gold,  
Traversed the waves, an unknown land explored,  
The cross their standard, but their creed the sword.  
Their steps were graves, o’er prostrate realms they trod ;  
They worshipped Mammon while they vowed to God.

‘ On September 8 (1893) the Lords threw out Gladstone’s second Home Rule Bill by a majority of ten to one. Within a fortnight the House of Commons rose—to meet again in November. Then occurred a situation which appeared to me one of the strangest in my political experience. I never for a moment supposed that Gladstone, with reference to what the Lords had done, would (to use a phrase which of late days has “ caught on ”) “ take it lying down.” He was announced to speak at Edinburgh in September. Thither I hurried, never doubting that I should hear a challenge to the Lords and the announcement of a great campaign against them. Instead of that, he made a speech, as usual, full of interest on various matters, but only dealing tenderly with the Lords. Now and then he approached the burning question of their late conduct and then slid off to something else. The performance somewhat reminded me of the well-known preacher who used to say, when in his sermon he came to something hard to deal with, “ This, my brethren, is a difficulty ; let us look it boldly in the face and pass on.” Anyone could see that the audience were alert, eager, and anxious to be “ at ” the Lords. They

reminded me of a pack of hounds ready to be laid on, but the huntsman gave them no encouragement.

‘Still I kept on thinking afterwards that there was something in the background, and that the campaign against the Lords would be opened sooner or later. But this was not the case, and the House of Commons met again in November and worked very hard until after Christmas and into the New Year over a Parish Councils Bill, an Employers’ Liability Bill, etc., and no sign was given by the Liberal leaders of any attack on the Hereditary Chamber, once likened by Lord Rosebery to “a mediæval barque stranded in the tideway of the nineteenth century.” And here we are at the time I write fairly started on the twentieth century and there is the old barque still in its old place—firm, immoveable, always abounding in the work of obstruction. Again, to utter my hackneyed ejaculation:—“What a country to endure such things!”

‘Yet Mr. Gladstone did not altogether submit in silence to the assumption and presumption (quite natural) of the Hereditary ones for, on the 1st of March, 1894, a few days before the close of the Winter Session, he took the opportunity, when speaking on the Lords’ “Amendments” (what a word for their antics!) to the Local Government Bill, to declare that in his opinion the obstruction of the Lords could not be suffered much longer, and made a very fine condemnation of the whole business, which was enthusiastically received by the Liberals and in sullen surprise by the Tories. As I have indicated above, nothing yet has come of this great speech, but it will bear fruit some time or other and will assist the people of this country whenever they do make up their minds that they wish to be really a self-governing nation.

‘But this was the last Parliamentary speech of the Grand Old Man. I always regret that I did not hear it. A short time afterwards he resigned the Premiership. One reason was his deafness and other physical infirmities, but it is pretty



clear now that he would have held on a bit if he could have got his colleagues to agree to some diminution of our vast and extravagant expenditure. That, I say, seems to be clear, but I have very little doubt in my own mind that it was also because he could not carry his colleagues with him that he did not remain to fight the question of the Lords.<sup>1</sup>

‘I shall not try to depict Gladstone’s course, career, and character, even in a sentence or two. It would be a useless effort. In John Morley’s *Life of him*—I should think to politicians the most interesting biography that ever was written—all can be found that anyone can desire to know of one of the greatest of men by one of the greatest of writers. To Radicals it must be intensely interesting to find from this book how during a great part of Mr. Gladstone’s life he was fighting to maintain their principles and promote their policy in Cabinets and behind the scenes with as much energy and persistency as he displayed in public.

‘Exit Gladstone. Enter Rosebery, who now became Prime Minister, taking in virtually all the old Cabinet, and professing to be going to carry out the old policy of Mr. Gladstone.

‘I now come to the Session of 1894. After the Lords had thrown out Mr. Gladstone’s Home Rule Bill, Mr. Asquith, in commenting on the proceeding, said that, while the Lords retained the power to do things of that kind, our legislation in the House of Commons was not much more than “ploughing the sand.” This picturesque simile being so apt at once took people’s fancy, and was a pretty good description of the

<sup>1</sup> I learned from Mr. Gladstone’s own lips that he had not favoured a Dissolution on the rejection of the Home Rule Bill. But, when to that rejection were added the mutilation of the Local Government Bill and the virtual destruction of the Employers’ Liability Bill, he thought that there was a clear and strong case against the Lords, and that there ought to be an appeal to the country. This view was not shared by his colleagues; and, as he had resolved not to face another General Election, he felt that he could not force a Dissolution, in the consequences of which he would have no share.—G. W. E. R.



remainder of our performances in the House of Commons during this Parliament. But there was one exception, and that was the Budget of Sir William Harcourt. This, being a matter of taxation, the Lords could not touch, and accordingly this reform in our fiscal system under Harcourt's brilliant Parliamentary management became law.

‘ Virtually, it was, by a rearrangement of the Death-Duties, a plan to put the burden of taxation on the shoulders of those most able to bear it. Such a plan was, of course, opposed by the whole force of the Tory Party night after night in the most determined manner. How we ever carried it with our majority of little over thirty seems to me, in looking back, to have been perfectly marvellous. The moral is that a small majority when in earnest can do wonders. The last stage of the Budget was carried in the Commons by a majority of only twenty. When it got to the Lords the Peers moaned and groaned and almost wept over it, and it appeared from their utterances as though they expected to end their days in the Workhouse. But they could not touch it. When will the time come when they will be prohibited from touching and destroying all other good legislation besides that which is connected with Finance ?

‘ Another proof of how a party in real earnest can get along was to be found in the success we had in carrying even the increased duties on Beer and Spirits, which were part of the Budget. Even the Irish Liquor-men stood true and helped us to a majority of thirteen on these duties : many of them coming up to vote who, as Tim Healy described them, were “up to the neck in whiskey.” This seemed to me rather a good phrase which might be amplified by saying that the British Nation is “up to the neck in alcohol.”

‘ An incident in the House of Lords had a considerable influence on political opinion and feeling during this Session. It was this—Lord Rosebery, the new Prime Minister, made a speech there, a few days after his appointment, in which,

speaking of Home Rule, he said it could not be carried until it was supported by the English whom he called the "Predominant Partner." This expression irritated the Nationalists very much. I think myself that the expression was capable of some softening explanation in the connexion in which it was used. But the Irishmen saw nothing but evil in it, and it affected seriously his influence and popularity among them.

'As regards Lord Rosebery I have always been doubtful whether his connexion with the Turf did him from a political point of view more good or harm. He won the Derby once with a horse called "Ladas," and someone who wished rather mischievously to ridicule his devotion to the Turf said that, soon after this win, he was addressing a public meeting somewhere and commenced his speech by saying "Ladas and Gentlemen." His position on the Turf, of course, tended to his popularity with the roughs, rowdies, thoughtless, reckless, Philistine, Freebooter, and "jolly-good-fellow" sort of people, who make up a large portion of the body politic, but on the other hand what is called the "Nonconformist Conscience" had a great dislike—or thought it had—for this kind of thing. But, on the whole, I incline to think that the rough and rowdy lot were slightly the "predominant partners," and that Lord Rosebery gained just a little more than he lost by his turfite propensities. Yet to the impartial observer it seems a little strange that a man in the position of Lord Rosebery, and one who has often shown his genuine and hearty sympathy with the weak, the poor, and the distressed, should patronize a system which is the very corner-stone of the national gambling which demoralizes and degrades so large a portion of our people. But, at all events, Lord Rosebery met all the attacks on him on this matter with his unfailing good-humour, and defended his conduct by adducing evidence that Cromwell used to run race-horses. This probably had some effect on the "Nonconformist Conscience," but how much I know not. About the time of all this discussion

regarding Lord Rosebery and the Turf I attended a big anti-gambling meeting in London. Dr. Percival spoke, and made a very strong, indeed almost personal, attack on Lord Rosebery relative to the Turf. A few weeks or months afterwards Lord Rosebery made him Bishop of Hereford, which I think ought to be "counted to him for righteousness."

' It was during this Session that I moved one night a Resolution praying Her Majesty, when she bestowed any title or honour, to accompany the grant with a statement of the reason of its bestowal, as is done when the Victoria Cross is granted. I thought that it would be interesting and instructive to the nation to have it stated how many barrels of beer a brewer had made to obtain a Peerage; how many voters a candidate had bribed to secure a Baronetcy; how many enemies a warrior had slain in warfare to obtain Stars and Garters; and so forth. All this I put forth in a short speech, but Harcourt, who was then leading the House, would not have my plan, but met it with a few good jokes—his principal objection, however, being that it would be impossible to obtain a truthful statement of the nature which I suggested. So I was beaten by fifty-two to thirty-four. But I think my principle is right—Honour only for Merit. The public which confers the honour has a right to know the nature of the merit. Two of the best lines ever written are :—

' Honour and shame from no condition rise;  
Act well your part, there all the honour lies.

' And when "honours" are given only for good actions, then they will be honours in deed and in truth.

' About the middle of June (1894) we had our great Conference at Leeds to express Liberal opinion on the House of Lords. There was a good deal of enthusiasm, but the proceedings were not on the whole very satisfactory. There was a want of definiteness as to how, when, and where the attack was to be made. The Lords must, I should think,

laugh at our proceedings as much as the Augurs did of old, and as much as probably the Bishops do when they read reports of our speeches at the Liberation Society.

‘I was once sitting in a room where I had to wait for half an hour before a meeting, and by the fire was sitting a poorly clad, rather wretched-looking, old man, gently moaning at intervals. I asked him if anything was the matter, and he said—“No—I was only just thinking what a deal of trouble it takes to get the world right and to keep it right.” The same idea must have come down through the ages to most of us—well embodied in Hamlet’s words :—

‘The time is out of joint; O, cursed spite,  
That ever I was born to set it right !

‘It was in June of this year (1894) that President Carnot was assassinated. I mention this because it recalls to me how many of the great ones of the earth I have seen “done to death” during my time. Here is the list (imperfect) which occurs to me as I write :—

Three American Presidents  
One French President  
One Czar  
One Sultan  
Two Kings  
One Queen  
One Empress

What a theme for moralizing ! But I content myself with saying that, though the Insurance Offices tell me that the trade of the Publican is the most deadly of all with which they deal, yet the trade of ruling men seems to be worse.

‘When the Session of 1894 came to an end, the War between China and Japan had just broken out, and I asked a few of the men in the House, who I thought were experts, with which



side lay the prospects of victory. They all assured me that it was a safe thing for China ;—"immense population,"—"great resources," etc., etc. Yet—and I mention this to show how the race of prophets appears to be extinct, if it ever existed—Japan gained a comparatively easy victory over China.

'I was interested in some of the telegrams sent to us during the War. One ran—describing some naval engagement—as follows :—"At this time a junk was seen hurrying along the coast conveying the Commander-in-Chief to a place of safety." Another ran :—"A new Commander-in-Chief has been appointed ; he is at present keeping his bed."

'What the War itself was about I know not. I never do know what wars are about, but am always assured by both sides that they are fighting for freedom and justice and civilization, and all the rest of it. Mr. Cobden said that as he grew older he was more impressed by the sincerity of his fellow-men : so I suppose I must believe them, though it seems in these cases hard to understand how both can be right.

'I do not know that I have very much to say about the Session of 1895, the last (at the time of writing) which has been carried through under the auspices of a Liberal Government.

'One striking feature about it was the way in which our diminutive majority stuck together, and, although there were plenty of divisions of importance saved by a dozen or so more or less, we never got beaten until the middle of June.

'On the twenty-first of that month, on a Friday afternoon, I was sitting on a bench on the Terrace with Mr. Labouchere. We had passed through a week of dangers ; barely avoiding several "close shaves," especially on the Welsh Disestablishment Bill. To-day, Supply being "on," there was an apparent calm, and Sir William Harcourt strolling up to us said, in his genial way : "This is the first day that we have not had a crisis"—whereat we chuckled cheerfully. By and by the bell rang for a Division and we went upstairs to be beaten

by seven by the Tories on a vote for Cordite, of which they said there was not enough in store.

Much has been said and written about this famous vote, and discussion has taken place as to whether it was a vote carefully prepared by the Tories or otherwise. I think that everyone who reads what is said about it by Sir Richard Temple<sup>1</sup> in his Memoirs will see that it was carefully engineered by the Tories. Whether our "Whips" as carefully tried to countertermine them is another matter, which will perhaps never be cleared up.

I was once at a kind of clerical gathering where the clergyman was explaining how he had got his organ played, etc., and he said: "Whether I shall ever again get a schoolmaster, with a female relative able to play the organ, is known only to Him who knows the secrets of all hearts." Anyway, the Liberal Government made no effort to retrieve the disaster, but seemed to accept it with great resignation. I was somewhat surprised that Campbell-Bannerman<sup>2</sup> did not somehow or other turn and rend the Tories more than he did, for in their Cordite proceeding they had virtually accused him of lying. I suppose that most people were rather glad when this Session collapsed, for "ploughing the sand," i.e. working away at measures which one knows the Lords will not pass, is a kind of political treadmill which does not tend much towards gratification or edification—

' A dull rotation such as asses feel

Who tread the circuit of the cistern-wheel.

'So now Lord Salisbury formed a Government. But, before saying more about that and what followed it, I will allude to one or two Parliamentary episodes which impressed me.

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for the Kingston Division of Surrey.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for the Stirling Burghs and Secretary of State for War; became Prime Minister 1905.

‘There is a common saying that speeches in the House do not turn votes. Like all popular maxims, this has a substratum of truth, and like most of them is not absolutely correct. We had a case this Session disproving the universality of the maxim which is supposed to have been illustrated by the old Member who, on being asked if he ever heard a speech in the House which changed his opinion, replied : “Yes, many a one ; but never one which changed my vote.”

‘Well, on this occasion Sir Henry James<sup>1</sup> moved the adjournment of the House to consider the Indian Import Duties. It was supposed that he had a very strong case, and that all Lancashire would be forced to support. Down came the Tories in hosts,

“Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,”

thinking that they had the game in their hands, and that the last hour of the Liberal Government had come. But when James had finished, up rose Sir Henry Fowler<sup>2</sup>—the Secretary for India—and put his case so forcibly, so clearly, and so convincingly, pleading what he believed to be the cause of India with such pathos and power, that the Opposition melted away like snow in Summer, and instead of being beaten we had a majority of 195. Never did I see a greater personal Parliamentary triumph than was then gained by my friend Sir Henry Fowler.

‘In the early part of this Session our Speaker—Peel—retired. I see in my journal that I mention his farewell speech as lasting ten minutes and “about *perfect* in tone, temper and expression.” Let the reader mark that I wrote this before Mr. Peel—now Lord Peel—had become an eminent Temperance Reformer, so that there can be no suspicion of bias in my summing-up. I doubt whether there was ever a Speaker who on great occasions maintained the dignity

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Bury ; created Lord James of Hereford 1895.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for Wolverhampton ; created Viscount Wolverhampton 1908.



and credit of the House more satisfactorily than he did. I think that everyone truly respected him. I did ; so much so, that I regretted his accepting the regulation Peerage when he retired.

‘The next business was to select a new Speaker. On our side Campbell-Bannerman was spoken of; Courtney was spoken of, and possibly others of whom I did not know. Either Courtney or Bannerman would in my opinion have done well, yet it was probably better that from one cause and another both fell through. Courtney some years later became one of the best and bravest of the Pro-Boers, whose courage in the cause of peace and justice ennobled our public life ; and Bannerman became the leader of the Liberal Party in times of the greatest difficulty and depression. How he acted in these trying times I will not say here, but if anyone doubts that he did well let him look at the way in which he was persistently vituperated, misrepresented, and abused by the Tory Press, and he will have no doubt that he must have done excellently well. Had either of these men been made Speaker, we probably might have lost them from our active fighting forces.

‘The choice of the House fell on Mr. Gully,<sup>1</sup> the candidate of the Liberals, who defeated the Tory candidate, Sir Matthew White Ridley,<sup>2</sup> by a few votes. Mr. Gully represented Carlisle—the constituency for which I sat for so many years. He was very little known in the House, where he had never taken much part in Debate, but he soon showed that he had all the rules, &c., at his fingers’ ends, and thoroughly vindicated the choice which the Liberals had made.

‘I may mention here that, when the General Election came, the Tories opposed Mr. Gully’s re-election at Carlisle, a proceeding which gave rise to a good deal of unfavour-

<sup>1</sup> Created Viscount Selby 1903.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for the Blackpool Division of Lancashire ; created Viscount Ridley 1900.



able comment. Perhaps it was not quite playing the game in the usual way, but for my part I sympathize with any body of politicians who fight for their principles at a contested election—but then the fight must be for principles.

‘The idea that a Speaker is not to be opposed has a tendency to bring the dry rot into the Constituency for which he sits, and is an idea which ought not to be assimilated to the Law of the Medes and Persians which altereth not. By the way. I suppose the Medes and Persians were the Tories of the Old World—but more consistent than the modern Tories, who resemble the leopard mentioned by the schoolboy. He was asked “Can the leopard change his spots?”—to which he replied: “Certainly, when he’s tired of one spot he goes away to another.”

‘Among minor incidents of the Session was the clapping of hands by a lady in delight at some reference made in the House to Woman’s Suffrage. She was promptly removed from the premises. It is not often that anything of this kind has to be done. But I remember one evening, when coming down to the House, a man was pointed out to me standing in the Lobby who they said had been turned out of the Gallery for being drunk. I asked what he had done, and was told that he had said “Bosh” on hearing some of the speeches. It seemed to me that this was not at all strong evidence of drunkenness.

‘The most useful talk which we had during this Session was Harcourt’s serious and impressive warning as to our immense public expenditure. But who cares for such things? “Hang the expense” is the motto, and Members of Parliament on both sides of the House spend more time in urging on fresh expenditure than in pleading for any sort of economy. Parodying a little the lines of a well-known hymn—of the impartial onlooker it may be said that he

‘Sees every day the cost extend,  
And wonders where the scene will end.

## CHAPTER X

## TRIUMPHANT TORYISM

WHEN, as narrated in a former page, the House of Commons, on a snatch-division, censured the War Office for having an insufficient store of Cordite, Lord Rosebery and his colleagues made haste to resign. Lord Salisbury again became Prime Minister, and, addressing the House of Lords on the 27th of June, he said: 'We have but one policy, and that is Dissolution.' Parliament was dissolved on the 8th of July, 1895.

'Milvain,' says Lawson, 'was sent down to Cockermouth to fight me, but somehow or other I beat him by a majority of 241.

'One of the ridiculous Election Songs which the little boys sang up and down was :—

' Sir Wilfrid is a gentleman,  
But Milvain is a fool :  
Before he goes to Parliament  
He ought to go to school,

which was more untrue than most electioneering efforts, for Milvain behaved like an intelligent gentleman. I believe that if he had promised to vote for the Eight Hours Bill he would have got in, but, being honestly opposed to it, he declined "to sell the truth to serve the hour"—a course by no means taken by all candidates.'

When the General Election of 1895 was ended, it was found that Lord Salisbury had a large majority over Liberals

and Nationalists combined, and the Tory Government entered on ten years of undisputed power.

‘This General Election,’ says Lawson, ‘was I suppose about the most complete smash that the Liberal Party ever experienced, and was the inauguration of a series of years of the most doleful, deadly, dreadful politics that one can conceive of.

‘One cannot but moralize on the reason why the working classes who really hold the balance of power in this country should have taken this line and returned a Parliament determinedly set against all measures really for their good.

‘Everyone will have his reason. I have mine, which I *think* is a good one.

‘When the Liberals suffered a great defeat at the General Election of 1874, Mr. Gladstone, writing of it afterwards, said he believed the principal reason of the disaster was that the Liberals were swept away by a “torrent of gin and beer.” That torrent really flows at every General Election, and circumstances at times enable it to flow with greater volume, or, rather, prevent more efficient opposition being made to its deadly force. Those who direct this “torrent of gin and beer”—the great brewers and liquor-dealers—are always watching their opportunity.

‘In 1895 the Liberals had threatened many corrupt interests who know that in the Liquor-Trade they have their surest and most trusty ally, and my belief is that, in this Election, Drink swept the country more thoroughly than it had ever done before. What I mean is that the Liquor-Power was able to take advantage of the disorganization and discontent existing to a considerable extent in the Liberal ranks more than it had ever done before. I may be quite wrong, but I should like anyone to suggest any better reason which made numbers of working men vote against their own

and their country's welfare, except the hold which the Liquor-Power has upon them.

‘Anyway, the Electorate overwhelmingly supported the new Government composed of Tories and Liberal Unionists, who I suppose may be now said to have started on their career of Imperialism. To what depths of disgrace and disaster that policy has brought us those who read these pages know too well. Whether they will do anything to check the “Torrent of Gin and Beer,” who knows? I always think about Drink that it will be “the last Enemy that shall be destroyed”—because it is the strongest, and people are afraid to tackle it.

‘Before Parliament met for the Session of 1896, outsiders, by deputation and so forth, did all they could to enlist the new Government on their various sides. The friends of Armenia got no comfort from them. The permanently distressed agriculturists got no real encouragement; but the denominational educationists were almost openly patted on the back.

‘But the most important and portentous event of the recess, or indeed of modern times, took place on the last day of 1895, when Dr. Jameson invaded the Transvaal with a few hundred men who were promptly met, overpowered, and imprisoned by the Boers. These ruffians were in touch with Cecil Rhodes, who knew all about the Raid; but the question of supreme interest was how much Mr. Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, knew of the intended raid; and that point has not been cleared up at the time when I am writing this.

‘Another wondrous revelation of the state of public opinion in this country was seen when some months later, the Boers having released their prisoners—soldiers in our own army—these men who had taken part in this sordid and senseless outrage were brought to England to take their trial.

‘They were received in the streets with acclamation; they were cheered in the Police-Court where they were committed



for trial, and it was said at the time that, if a man was dressed in the coat, leggings, and slouch hat which was supposed to be the dress of the raiders, he might calculate on being treated to drinks fifteen times in an hour in the Public Houses by the "Man in the Street." Altogether, never was there such a manifestation of how we cared nothing for whether a thing was right or wrong. I suppose the bottom of this approbation of these criminals was because they had raided the Boers, who years ago had defeated us in fair fight at Majuba. Could anything be more utterly contemptible?

'All the excitement caused by these proceedings was seething, simmering, smouldering, and even blazing, when Parliament assembled for the Session of 1896.

'A long, weary, and depressing Session indeed it was, distinguished for the very late hours which we kept—often not rising "till daylight did appear," and on one occasion sitting from 3 P.M. on a Thursday until 1.30 P.M. on a Friday. In looking back, it seems very curious that this sort of thing should have been necessary when this Government had such an immense majority. But a minority when it sets to work resolutely to use all the forms and rules of the House to impede business can do wonders. And really the business which the Government asked us to do was of such a mischievous nature that the Opposition had justification in acting on Lord Randolph Churchill's maxim that "the duty of an opposition is to oppose."

'A Rating Bill, an Education Bill, and an Irish Land Bill were the main subjects of our nocturnal labours and controversies. The two first were good specimens of the usual Tory policy of benefiting the classes at the cost of the masses.

'But the Irish Land Bill Debates were tolerably entertaining, as there was perpetual growling from the Irish Landlords against the Government for not dealing fairly with them; at times indeed they were almost "nasty." Of course,

the House of Lords came to their rescue; but after much wrangling the Lords' amendments were somehow or other harmonized with the Bill, which was ultimately passed, Balfour announcing on the occasion that "a great peace had descended on the land." I very much doubted whether this grand result would follow, for I remember how 1900 years ago Peace on Earth was announced, not by a Prime Minister but by an angel—the result being that during all these centuries, and up to this very moment, the members of the human race have made it their principal business and their proudest boast to kill one another.

'Still, there is among nations a dislike to seeing *other* nations indulging in slaughter and massacre in which they themselves have no pecuniary interest, and accordingly one day we passed a Resolution expressing our "sympathy" with the Armenians, whom the Turks, according to custom, were massacring, though with rather more activity than usual. Whether this did much good to anyone I know not. But I fancy that if, some years later, when we ourselves were busy shooting Boers, a Resolution of sympathy for these unfortunate people had been passed by some Foreign Legislature it would have had no effect upon us by way of causing us to cease from their destruction.

'The odd thing about the immense preparations for satisfactory and efficient slaughter of our fellow-creatures, on perfecting which we spend so large a portion of our Parliamentary time, is that they always turn out according to the "experts" to be miserable failures. At some period we are assured that all the machinery of slaughter, all the arrangements for our fighting men, are most admirable. A few years go by, and the very same experts come down to the House and "make night hideous" by their cries of anguish over our hopeless, helpless state of unpreparedness for doing anything in the way of National Defence.

‘One night, after Mr. Arnold-Forster<sup>1</sup>—a very able and competent specimen of the critics—had been delivering himself in the above strain, I wrote as follows, summing up his speech :—

‘We’re really in a dreadful state,  
Our strength is small, our danger great,  
All nations are in combination  
To rush upon this wretched nation.  
We’ve got no proper stocks or locks,  
We’ve got no ships to fill the docks,  
We’ve got no cruisers fit for trips,  
We’ve got no men to man our ships,  
We’ve got no coal, we’ve got no wood,  
In fact, we have got nothing good ;  
We’re very badly off for soap,  
We’ve got no confidence or hope,  
But still we’re not of all bereft,  
So long as Arnold-Forster’s left !

‘Strange to say, during this Session (1896) Massey-Mainwaring<sup>2</sup> carried by a large majority a Resolution in favour of opening National Museums, &c., on Sundays. To my surprise, Goschen warmly supported this. Altogether, I began to hope that “unctuous rectitude” was a little on the wane.

‘Drink, as usual, came to the front more or less during this Session. Mr. Cuthbert Quilter<sup>3</sup> brought in his Pure Beer Bill—virtually to encourage the brewing of beer from barley, in the hope that thus more barley would be used, and so the farmers would be benefited. However, one of the brewers said they would only use more foreign barley ; which would, of course, be a heart-breaking thing to an English agriculturalist.

‘I thought the commencement of Mr. Quilter’s speech rather diverting. He said : “Mr. Speaker, the origin of Beer is lost in antiquity.”

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Belfast.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for Central Finsbury.

<sup>3</sup> M.P. for South Suffolk.

‘The other development of the Drink or Anti-Drink Movement was found in the Government’s appointment of a Royal Commission to enquire into the Drink-Trade. The admirable selection of Lord Peel was made for Chairman ; but the constitution of the rest of the Commission was comical to a degree. It was composed of three sections—first, persons supposed to be hostile to the Liquor-Trade ; secondly, persons engaged in the Trade ; and thirdly persons who were supposed to have no opinion at all upon the matter —“ Christians at large,” as I have heard these called. There was a *prima facie* case that the Liquor-Trade was doing harm—else there was no case for enquiry—and the idea of placing on the Jury one third of men who were interested in that Trade was as thoroughly Balfourian as anything which that remarkable statesman has done.

‘It always reminds me of the case when a man was tried for stealing a pig. The evidence against him was perfectly clear, yet the Jury brought in a verdict of “ Not guilty.” “ How is this, gentlemen ? ” said the Judge, surprised. “ Why, you see, my Lord,” replied the foreman, “ we have each had a bit of the pig ! ”

‘I honestly confess that I looked upon it as a Commission *pour rire*. But so overwhelming is the case against the Liquor-Traffic that—let enquiry be made anywhere, anyhow, by anybody—something more or less damnatory is sure to come out.

‘Of course, everybody knew who knew anything, that the appointment of a Commission was only a move to postpone any dealing with the Liquor-Question. I should think that there was no public matter which had been so exhaustively discussed for years and years as this drink-question. Besides, we had had all sorts of committees of the Lords and of the Commons to enquire into it, and the remarkable thing is that none of them had blessed it altogether and most of them



had been compelled by the weight of evidence to paint it in more or less of its true colours.

‘Now among the men on the Commission whom *I* should call sound on the Liquor-Question were the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Temple), Sir Charles Cameron, M.P.,<sup>1</sup> Mr. Caine, M.P.,<sup>2</sup> Mr. Whittaker, M.P.,<sup>3</sup> Mr. Herbert Roberts, M.P.,<sup>4</sup> etc. These men determined that the enquiry should not be a sham, and right hard did they work—supported and protected by Lord Peel—in bringing out the facts of the case.

‘The liquor-men, of course, did their very best to illustrate the advantages, &c., of the Trade, while the neutral section acted pretty much as neutrals generally do—that is, in a neutralizing manner. I have sometimes wondered whether they were proud of having been appointed on the Commission avowedly as men who had no ‘settled convictions’ on the greatest social and political question of the day, resembling the person mentioned by Cowper :—

‘Whose sole opinion, whatsoe’er befall,  
Centres at last in having none at all.

‘But I must not ramble on about this notable Commission. Suffice it to say here that they agreed on the gigantic evil still existing amongst us, to remove which, they said, “no sacrifice would be too great.”

‘The remedies suggested in the two reports which resulted from their labours contained many good suggestions, but the best suggestion according to my ideas was found in what was called an “addendum” signed by the Archbishop, Sir Charles Cameron, Mr. Whittaker, Mr. Caine, and Mr. Herbert Roberts, in which it was recommended that the public in their different districts should have the power of voting Liquor-shops out of those districts when disposed to do so.

<sup>1</sup> For the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow.

<sup>2</sup> For N.W. Cornwall.

<sup>3</sup> For Spen Valley Division of Yorkshire.

<sup>4</sup> For West Denbighshire.

‘I naturally thought that this was worth all the rest of the reports put together, for it was exactly what I had advocated in the House of Commons more than thirty years previously, and which, along with many trusted comrades, I had spoken in favour of on innumerable platforms. We sometimes think there is no progress—“Who will show us any good?”—but I cannot help rejoicing that the policy which, I doubt not, many persons thought I was a lunatic for advocating has now been endorsed by one of the greatest Archbishops of the great Church of England.

‘Now I come to the Session of 1897.

‘I remember an Irish Member, who was not a teetotaller, concluding a speech once by addressing the Government with the words: “Do something sensible, and Posterity will acquit you.” But I doubt whether Posterity will acquit the Parliament of 1897 of criminal conduct in dealing with the enquiry into Dr. Jameson’s raid on the Transvaal. We had a select Committee to enquire into it, and on that Committee sat two or three of our leading Liberals. But the proceedings of the Committee became almost a farce when they refused to push home enquiries which *might* have shown how much Mr. Chamberlain was responsible for, or at least cognizant of, the Raid.

‘The guilt of Mr. Rhodes they distinctly affirmed; and, having done so, Mr. Chamberlain, who had himself signed the report, came down to the House and declared that Mr. Rhodes had acted as a man of honour.

‘The whole of this miserable and mysterious performance gave the worst impression in South Africa, and was a chief cause of that natural mistrust of England which smouldered in the bosom of the Boers and was a main factor in producing the frightful war of a few years later. No one has a right to condemn Mr. Chamberlain for his ideal of honour; but I mention all this above to illustrate the strange state at which public opinion had arrived in this country, when a man who

had publicly announced such a view could be looked up to by the multitude as a great and desirable statesman. It is rather satisfactory to me to remember that I made a speech in the House embodying these views at the time. Needless to say, no one cared two straws for the speech; but I suppose there is some good in speaking the truth, even in the most adverse circumstances.

‘Lord Salisbury made a speech this year in the House of Lords, in which he used an expression which seemed to me immensely instructive and suggestive. Alluding to the old Crimean War and our backing of Turkey, he said we had “put our money on the wrong horse.” Nevertheless, we go on in our Parliament and in our Government, backing all sorts of foreign adventurers without really knowing much more of their merits than the noble army of gamblers know about the horses which they back.

‘Much time indeed did we spend in this Session talking about Greece, Crete, Armenia, &c.—talk which never seemed to me to be fruitful of much good. So complicated and unsatisfactory indeed seemed to be our position and our views and intentions as a Liberal Party with regard to these Foreign matters that it seemed to be one of the principal reasons why Lord Rosebery about this time announced his retirement from the leadership of the Liberal Party.

‘I almost wish that I were a clever man, so that I might dilate suitably on Lord Rosebery’s character and conduct, but it would take a *very* clever man to do the subject justice. But one is rather inclined to liken him a little to “Reuben, unstable as water”; yet it is not a fair comparison, for he does “excel” in very many ways, though his excellence does not result in the public advantages for which we hope.

‘The somewhat disorganized state of the Liberal Party was illustrated, on one or two occasions, by the official “Whips” in the House voting against Harcourt, the official Leader.

‘ Another illustration of our chaotic condition was to be seen in the proceedings on the Second Reading of the Woman’s Suffrage Bill, against which a Whip was sent out signed by Asquith,<sup>1</sup> Hicks-Beach,<sup>2</sup> Broadhurst,<sup>3</sup> Bryce,<sup>4</sup> Sydney Buxton,<sup>5</sup> Joseph Chamberlain,<sup>6</sup> Henry Chaplin,<sup>7</sup> Sir James Fergusson,<sup>8</sup> Lord George Hamilton,<sup>9</sup> R. W. Hanbury,<sup>10</sup> U. Kay-Shuttleworth,<sup>11</sup> H. Labouchere,<sup>12</sup> Sir James Kitson,<sup>13</sup> J. Lloyd Morgan,<sup>14</sup> Sir John Mowbray,<sup>15</sup> Sir Joseph Pease,<sup>16</sup> and Sir Francis Sharp Powell.<sup>17</sup> Fancy those nine prominent Liberals straining every nerve in helping the Tories to “keep the bounds of Freedom narrower yet” ! Moreover, we carried the Second Reading by a majority of seventy-one. Later in the Session, when the Bill was down for Third Reading, it was delayed for hours by the discussion of the previous Orders, which gave an opportunity for continued talking of nonsense and making of senseless jokes until no time was left for the Bill. How little do outsiders know of the thick, stolid, solid, almost invincible resources of obstruction through which every reform must pass ere it can succeed ! One often wonders how any reform ever is passed at all.

‘ Much time and attention were taken up this Summer by the celebration of the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee, and there were some interesting incidents connected with the House of Commons and the event. One thing was the sermon which Canon Farrar preached to the Commons in St. Margaret’s Church. It was not nearly so good a sermon as the Bishop of Ripon (Dr. Boyd-Carpenter) gave us on the first Jubilee, ten years previously, and this rather surprised me, as I have

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for East Fife.    <sup>2</sup> M.P. for West Bristol.    <sup>3</sup> M.P. for Leicester.

<sup>4</sup> M.P. for South Aberdeen.

<sup>5</sup> M.P. for Poplar.

<sup>6</sup> M.P. for West Birmingham.

<sup>7</sup> M.P. for Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire.

<sup>8</sup> M.P. for N.E. Manchester.    <sup>9</sup> M.P. for Ealing Division of Middlesex.

<sup>10</sup> M.P. for Preston.

<sup>11</sup> M.P. for Clitheroe Division of Lancashire.

<sup>12</sup> M.P. for Northampton.    <sup>13</sup> M.P. for Colne Valley Division of Yorkshire.

<sup>14</sup> M.P. for West Carmarthenshire.    <sup>15</sup> M.P. for the University of Oxford.

<sup>16</sup> M.P. for Barnard Castle Division of Durham.    <sup>17</sup> M.P. for Wigan.



heard Farrar preach the very finest sermons which I have ever heard. But it was not the indifferent matter of the sermon, but its political allusions, that irritated certain good old Tories in the House, and it was with great difficulty that their efforts to get it in some way censured by the House were suppressed. How strange these things are! Surely if a member of any persuasion believes the principles of Liberalism to be right, he is bound to expound them, just as the man who believes the principles of Toryism to be right is equally bound to enforce them. Yet the accepted cry is: "No politics in the pulpit." Surely this is a great condemnation of the pulpit. Politics ought to be merely your duty to your neighbour. And this is to be excluded from the pulpit! My favourite Cowper has some lines on the sort of thing:—

‘As soldiers watch the signal of command,  
They learn to bow, to kneel, to sit, to stand—  
Content to fill religion’s vacant place  
With empty form, and gesture, and grimace.

‘The Commons were involved in another rather quaint incident. They were to present an Address to the Crown. Mostly on foot, and preceded by the Speaker in his coach, they marched through St. James’s Park on a hot day to Buckingham Palace. The appearance of the whole procession was rather more squalid than sublime. A few days previously a great South African magnate, named Barnato, had died on his way home from the Cape. As we were trudging along, someone heard a conversation between two women who were looking at us. Said one: "What’s all this?" To which the other replied: "I don’t know, but I think it’s Barney Barnato’s funeral"! Even when we reached Buckingham Palace, matters did not improve. There had been some miscalculation as to times, and things were not ready for our reception at the Palace, and for some time the Speaker was kept sitting on a parlour-chair in the hall. At

last, however, he was started at the head of the Members for the reception-room where our dutiful address was to be presented. I followed rather leisurely at the tail of the throng, when suddenly in the middle of the corridor I met the Speaker and the "leading hounds" on their way back from the reception-room, to which I never got. Several other Members were in the same case, I think. Altogether, the affair went off in a hugger-mugger kind of way, which left a certain amount of irritation in the minds of Members.

'Now came in the tact and good feeling of the Queen.

'Once the advisers of the great Napoleon came to him and said that there was considerable disaffection in Paris, asking him what should be done: "Gild the Dome of the Invalides," said Napoleon. The Queen somewhat similarly knew how to soothe ruffled feelings: so she invited us all to a garden-party at Windsor,—and we went. It was a fine afternoon and the "outing" was very pleasant. While we were all scattered about on the lawn, the Queen drove among us in her pony-carriage. The Parliamentary "Whips" took the opportunity, when they saw any prominent M.P., to bring him up to her Majesty's carriage as a kind of compliment. Suddenly they summoned me, and I was walked up to the carriage, but I don't think that the Queen said any word to me, and certainly I said no word to her. We merely looked at one another and then parted. I wonder what she thought of me. Possibly she was rather surprised at my being a civilized being.

'I have heard that once Mr. Gladstone was at a funeral. An old lady who was there asked who he was, and, on being told that it was Mr. Gladstone, said in some anxiety: "Oh, I hope he's not going to make a disturbance."

'In the Spring of this year (1897) I lost my friend Mr. Raper.<sup>1</sup> He was the best-informed man on the Liquor-Question in all its phases that ever I met, and my own imperfect know-

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Raper (1820–1897).

ledge of the subject is mainly derived from what he taught me. He may be said to have lived and died for the overthrow of the Liquor-Traffic; for, during the last years of his life I think that he must often have overtaxed his strength. For years and years I was in constant communication with him as to tactics, and his shrewdness in foreseeing what certain men would do in certain cases was wonderful. In relation to myself he proved himself a true friend, for as often as not when I made a speech he found fault with some part of it, and it is only a true friend who will tell you your faults. Of course, on the main question of policy we were as one man. In public speaking he was unique. He was the only man I have ever met who could get up at the close of a long meeting, and even then for a considerable time retain the interest and arouse the enthusiasm of the audience in the same way as it could be done at the beginning of a meeting. His style was his own. No reporting could give an idea of it, and no description could do it justice. The way in which he would deal with local events in the place where he was speaking, always turning them to account in attacking the Drink-Traffic, was marvellous. He was in reality as keen a Liberal as I was, but so astutely, when speaking on Prohibition, did he eliminate "Party" that I have heard a man say, speaking of a speech of his which he had heard: "I think Mr. Raper is a Tory."

' We buried him in one of the great London cemeteries on May 24th, and the funeral address at the grave was delivered by the Rev. Silvester Horne, whose words showed that he had a true appreciation of and admiration for the character of the noble and unselfish man whom we were laying to his rest. Most of the great Temperance organizations were represented at the funeral, and I think they all felt that they had lost a friend whose like they would never see again.

' Surely such a life is more beautiful and more truly noble than that of the warriors who deal death and destruction

around among their fellow-men. Yet in this strange world they are applauded and almost worshipped, while those who try to make the lives of others a little brighter, a little better, and a little happier are ignored, if not indeed condemned and despised. Will it always be so? Who knows? Yet perhaps the poet's prophecy was right:—

‘ The few shall not for ever sway,  
The many moil in sorrow;  
The powers of Hell are strong to-day,  
But Christ shall rise to-morrow.

‘ The seed which Mr. Raper sowed will some day bear fruit in a sober and a happy land.

‘ Strange to say within a few days of Mr. Raper's death another great notability in the Temperance world—Dr. Lees<sup>1</sup>—passed away. Probably he did as much by his writing for the Temperance movement as Mr. Raper did by his speaking. His clear, logical, and convincing attacks on alcohol and its backers, both socially and politically, were remarkable, and must have had a great effect on his thousands of readers.

‘ Some time before the opening of the Session of 1898 died Frank Lockwood,<sup>2</sup> one of the Members for York. He was perhaps about the most popular man of his day. To him truly might the hackneyed lines be applied:—

‘ His humour, as gay as the firefly's light,  
Played round every object and shone as it played,  
His wit in the combat, as harmless as bright,  
Never carried a heart-stain away on its blade.

‘ What he was most famous for was the power of caricaturing with pencil or pen any action or incident which took his fancy. This he accomplished with almost lightning rapidity. With two or three strokes he would tell a whole story, filling

<sup>1</sup> 1815–1897.

<sup>2</sup> Solicitor-General 1894–5.



the beholders with admiration and amusement. Sometimes, when sitting together in the House of Commons, something a little strange might occur, and then in a few minutes he would hand me some irresistibly comic representation of the whole affair. I have preserved a few of these sketches, which I think in coming years may be of considerable value.

‘ There was a contest for the seat left vacant at York between Sir Christopher Furness (Liberal) and Lord Charles Beresford (Conservative), and the latter won by eleven votes. I always used to think Lord Charles’s politics at an election would have been illustrated by his dancing a hornpipe, singing “Hearts of Oak,” and waving a Union Jack. I should fancy that York is just one of the places where this sort of boisterous “Rule Britannia-ism” would “take.” One curious incident about this election was that a Radical clergyman, who lived in Cumberland and was always telling Liberals their duty, hurried off to York to assist Lord Charles Beresford, solely on the ground that he was an Irishman. And indeed he proved his virtue by voting in favour of amnesty for the Irish rebels—for the everlasting Irish Question kept coming up in the House in all sorts of ways.

‘ We soon had a full-dress debate on a motion brought on by Lawson Walton<sup>1</sup> condemning our Indian Frontier policy, and I appear to have made a speech in its support, though I had quite forgotten the fact. I think that the best part of my speech must have been a quotation from Sir Lepel Griffin (some of whose opinions on another subject I have elsewhere criticized) who condemned the policy of “spending a quarter of a million annually on a post of defence and observation which defends and observes nothing, and on the maintenance of a road which leads nowhere.” But this is a policy which your average Englishman likes. It gives the pleasant impression that he is bullying somebody or other somewhere. In the course of the debate George Curzon made an able

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for South Leeds; Attorney-General 1905 till death.

speech against the motion—which is interesting—as, soon after he was sent out as Viceroy, he found out the evils of the “Forward Policy” which he replaced by our Liberal policy. We were beaten by 103, and I don’t think we had many more full-dress debates during the Session of 1898.

‘A debate on the Irish University struck me as interesting. It was taken part in by several of our best debaters, and some less eminent: Dillon,<sup>1</sup> Dr. Wallace,<sup>2</sup> Perks,<sup>3</sup> Lloyd-George,<sup>4</sup> Courtney,<sup>5</sup> John Morley,<sup>6</sup> etc., joining in. But the whole thing impressed me as being unreal. When at some earlier period some one suggested that they wanted in Ireland a University with a “Catholic atmosphere,” I thought political dodgery was in the ascendant. I find in my Parliamentary Journal, in reference to this debate:—“so ended the interesting, unintelligible, rubbishy, rotten, brilliant, bewildering, and unsatisfactory discussion.” I wonder now whether it deserved all, or any, of these epithets.

‘I have thought that one of the strangest things done this Session (1898) was the passing of a Resolution—at the instigation of Ashmead-Bartlett<sup>7</sup>—in favour of the integrity of China. This, of course, however, only meant that we should not allow other nations to get more plunder out of it than we did. Mr. Maclean, a Tory M.P.,<sup>8</sup> once used what I thought was a good phrase when he talked of the “organized brigandage of Europe.” Likewise, is it not curious how much more interest we take in other people’s affairs than in our own?

‘I have heard that John Bright once said when he saw the enormous crowds who were welcoming Garibaldi:—“I

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for East Mayo.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for East Edinburgh.

<sup>3</sup> M.P. for Louth Division of Lincolnshire.

<sup>4</sup> M.P. for Carnarvon District of Burghs.

<sup>5</sup> M.P. for Bodmin Division of Cornwall.

<sup>6</sup> M.P. for Montrose District of Burghs.

<sup>7</sup> M.P. for Eccleshall Division of Sheffield.

<sup>8</sup> For Cardiff District of Boroughs.

wonder when the working men will begin to demonstrate for themselves."

' On May 19th, Mr. Gladstone died, and on May 28th, we buried him in Westminster Abbey. His life has lately been written by Mr. John Morley, and never has a great man had a greater historian. I wish that I could add a fresh one of any value to the countless delineations of his career and character ; and, as to his private life and conversation, I know so little of it that I can contribute nothing of any interest to the world. But I doubt if anyone had a more intense admiration of Mr. Gladstone than I had. What occurs to me is to make a remark or two on the light which has been thrown on his character and on the character of his countrymen during the six years which, at the time of writing, have elapsed since his death.

' His funeral was a marvellous exhibition of popular feeling. All parties, all creeds, all shades of opinion, combined to pay homage to the departed statesman. For two days thousands and thousands of persons marched through Westminster Hall to view his coffin, in the Press was hardly a note of disparagement, and the popular admiration seemed to be unanimous.

' In reflecting on all this, it seems to me that his character must have been appreciated by the mass of the nation more for its brilliancy than for its real worth. I thought at the time, however, " Here is a demonstration of how the nation loves Peace, Economy, Justice, and Freedom, of which Mr. Gladstone during the latter part of his life was the most brilliant advocate and exponent." Oh ! how wrong I was. During the six years which I have mentioned, the Democracy, who can rule this country as they wish, have indulged in a welter of war, have supported the most extravagant Government the country has ever seen, have humbly bowed before the House of Lords (against the fatuous policy of which Mr. Gladstone made his farewell speech in the Commons), and have



elected a Parliament composed to a great extent of mere tools of ecclesiastics and agents of the Liquor-Trade. It is all very mysterious—a word which merely describes something of which one does not know the cause. But it looks as though mankind have an admiration for talent, but care little for righteousness. This is rather a black view of things, and a few months hence perhaps it will be shown to be all wrong. But in writing anything of the kind almost the only interest arises from stating one's individual views, whether right or wrong. So—to quote, with a variation, Mr. Chamberlain—I say: “What I have written, I have written.” We read: “Vox populi vox Dei.” But there are times when, thinking of the Democracy, the lines of the monarch in the Lady of the Lake seem more appropriate:—

‘Thou many-headed, monster thing—  
Oh! who would wish to be thy king?

‘But now I must hurry on to deal with more modern public incidents and political developments. With these a larger number of persons are acquainted, but the bulk of them will I fear be out of sympathy with the view which I hold and may express touching such incidents.

‘During the recess of 1898 the world was one day astonished by the appearance of a Manifesto from the Czar of Russia in favour of Peace and Disarmament. Very ably did he state his case, and very forcibly did he push home his conclusions. Notwithstanding what occurred afterwards, this manifesto was a landmark in the history of the world.

‘To discuss it in even an approach to a satisfactory manner would be beyond my space or my ability. I can but make casual remarks thereon. Of course, most of the “wise men,” who spend their lives in showing their fellows “How not to do it,” hinted at the Czar’s insincerity and declared that the whole thing was Utopian and Quixotic, which Ruskin says are “two of the devil’s pet words.” Nevertheless, the Czar’s



idea made some progress, and resulted later in a Conference of the Powers at the Hague, where certain rules and regulations were adopted for facilitating the settlement of international disputes without resorting to force.

‘Meanwhile we ourselves were, as usual, busy with slaughter—this time in the Soudan. I find the matter described as follows in my Parliamentary Journal :—

“The Sirdar,” *i.e.* Kitchener, succeeded in killing at Omdurman some 20,000 Dervishes in a shorter space of time than such slaughter had ever been perpetrated before. They were badly armed, but came out into the open and were simply shot down like rabbits at a battue by our perfected machinery. This gave intense delight to the nobility, gentry, and clergy, dissenting ministers, newspaper-writers, statesmen and the discerning public generally, and there was no end of glorification of the Sirdar, and banquets many in which the finest Jingo talk was indulged in.

‘There was a sequel to this Omdurman massacre, which was of rather a more pleasant nature. Just after the battle it was reported to Kitchener that a French officer and his retinue had arrived at Fashoda up the Nile, which Kitchener described as a “stinking swamp.” For days and days in England there was the greatest excitement over this, and I feel sure that the nation was ready for any expenditure of blood and money to drive the Frenchmen out of the “stinking swamp.” But, so far as I understand, Kitchener hastened up to the spot and talked to the French officer like one gentleman to another about the matter, and the result was that the French Government agreed to leave us in sole possession of the “stinking swamp,” for which we “thanked God and took courage”; eating dinners, waving flags, and singing “Rule Britannia” more lustily than ever.’

## CHAPTER XI

## KHAKI

IN the autumn of 1896 Lord Rosebery had resigned the leadership of the Liberal Party, and had been succeeded in that great trust by Sir William Harcourt; who, having lost his seat for Derby at the General Election of 1895, was now M.P. for West Monmouthshire. The relations between the new leader, his colleagues, and his followers were by no means harmonious; and the Liberal party gradually fell into as factious, forlorn, and dispirited a condition as it had ever known.

‘Punch’ thoroughly enjoyed the situation, and thus expressed it in a letter supposed to have been written by Sir William Harcourt to Mr. John Morley in the autumn of 1898:

The year declines : in yonder Malwood glades  
The last leaf droops reluctant, leaving bare  
The last cock-pheasant. I could hit the thing  
From this same window, if it did not move !  
I was a fighter once ; but that is past,  
Except on paper. You recall the time  
When, under our great Captain’s eagle-glance,  
I in the golden prime of Derby days,  
You at Newcastle <sup>1</sup> (somewhere in the North),  
We fought like Kitcheners to win Home Rule—  
Or was it Local Veto ? One forgets !  
How like a dream the youthful splendour fades !

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Morley had been defeated at Newcastle at the General Election of 1895.

For we were relatively young, and took  
 Time by the forelock, which is not the same  
 As Celtic fringes.<sup>1</sup> Life had colour then ;  
 And, where the shadows crossed it, you and I,  
 Did we not let our sunbeam-play of wit  
 Fall like a glad surprise ? I fancy so.  
 But even autumn's after-glow is off ;  
 And now a common blueness, winter's wear,  
 Obscures the prospect—which is also blue.

‘ On February 7th, 1899,’ says Lawson, ‘ the Liberal Party met at the Reform Club to choose a leader in the place of Harcourt, who had resigned. On account of being an old Liberal, I was honoured by being placed in the chair. In a short speech I stated what the business was, and one of the newspapers said that I got through “ without an anecdote.” ’

‘ This was a remarkable meeting, for we were unanimous—a most remarkable thing for an assembly of Liberals—and we elected Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman for our leader. Campbell-Bannerman's own speech was tactful and hearty, and the whole function passed off most pleasantly.

‘ One Wednesday during this Session we got a chance of discussing a Scotch Local Veto Bill. Again I quote from my Journal a description of the debate, but a similar description would fit the case of almost any Veto debate.

“ John Wilson<sup>2</sup> moved it shortly, sensibly and solidly. Then Faithfull Begg<sup>3</sup> opposed—‘ Wait for the Commission ’—‘ Failure in Canada ’ etc. Duncombe<sup>4</sup> in a few platitudes seconded the opposition. Colville<sup>5</sup> made a good speech, answering a good deal of Begg's nonsense. Heywood-Johnstone<sup>6</sup> was tolerably absurd, talking very vaguely of new licensing arrangements. Munro-Ferguson<sup>7</sup> supported the Bill

<sup>1</sup> Lord Salisbury's phrase for the outlying districts of the United Kingdom.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for Govan Division of Lanarkshire.

<sup>3</sup> M.P. for St. Rollox Division of Glasgow.

<sup>4</sup> M.P. for West Cumberland.

<sup>5</sup> M.P. for N.E. Lanarkshire.

<sup>6</sup> M.P. for North-West Sussex.

<sup>7</sup> M.P. for Leith District of Burghs.

mildly, but well for him. Ashcroft<sup>1</sup> (I have quite forgotten as I write who or what he was) raged with strong adjectives and weak arguments. I followed for about 25 minutes (I wonder what I said). Sir Mark Stewart<sup>2</sup> was unusually feeble and illogical against the Bill. Douglas—a new Scotch Member<sup>3</sup>—spoke fairly well for the Bill. Thorburn<sup>4</sup> was tolerably ridiculous. Campbell-Bannerman was very good for the principle of the Bill, and said virtually that Scotland should have the first chance for Veto. The Lord Advocate<sup>5</sup> was feeble and rather silly against the Bill.”

‘Then we divided and were beaten by 74.

‘During all this Session the shadow of coming trouble in the Transvaal hung more or less over the House. Chamberlain was busy working his hardest—of course, I do not say intentionally—to bring things to a crisis. Nagging, bragging, threatening, bluffing, bullying, swaggering, and all to get a footing to interfere in a matter with which we had no earthly right to interfere in the Transvaal. I am glad to think that a handful of Radicals did what they could by speech and vote—on the rare occasions when they had a chance—to avert the awful catastrophe which ensued. But what were they among so many?

‘The nation was gradually inflamed and I really believe considered that there was something noble and patriotic in sending out troops, exceeding the Boers in numbers by about 5 to 1, to complete the overthrow of their freedom.

‘I believe also that there are even now (1904) plenty of grown up men, intelligent withal and good, who admire Mr. Chamberlain for his proceedings and look upon him as a great statesman. Of such is the world made up!

‘During this Session there was a very interesting bye-

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Oldham.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for Kirkcudbrightshire.

<sup>3</sup> For N.W. Lanarkshire.

<sup>4</sup> M.P. for Peebles and Selkirk.

<sup>5</sup> A. G. Murray, M.P. for Edinburgh and St. Andrews Universities; created Lord Dunedin 1905.



election in which I took some part. Sir John Austin—the Member for Osgoldcross—had caused some friction in his constituency by his “pro-brewer” line of action, which irritated his Temperance constituents. (He was himself, I believe, a maltster). Things getting rather hot, he made up his mind to take the Chiltern Hundreds and go down and appeal to the constituency on avowedly Liquor lines. Here then was a challenge to the Prohibitionists which we could not decline. A candidate was available—and we could not have had a better one—in the person of Mr. Charles Roberts, who unselfishly threw himself into the breach and fought the battle gallantly on Temperance grounds. The Tories brought forward no candidate of their own. We made a good fight, but Sir John, aided by J. Havelock Wilson, M.P.,<sup>1</sup> one of the working-men Members, and by the rampant, Radical parson of Cumberland, who had voted for Lord Charles Beresford because he was an Irishman, won by a fine majority.

‘I mention this fight because there was a moral to be drawn from it. It was virtually a combat in reference to Temperance legislation—the two candidates not differing materially on other points of the Liberal programme. So, if the Tories had really cared for Temperance reform they might have voted for Roberts without in any way injuring the Tory party. But the result of the Poll showed that they did nothing of the kind. And the moral is that the cornerstone of the Tory party is Drink, or in the words of Marion Crawford: “Beer is the great irrigator of Conservative principles.”

‘There was one very pathetic incident in the House during this Session (1899) of which, as I was an eye-witness, my relation may be of some interest. A Debate was proceeding,—instigated by John Morley—as to our doings on the Nile, when, after our victory, the tomb of the Mahdi was desecrated and his remains thrown into the Nile, or at least were treated

<sup>1</sup> For Middlesbrough.

in some such dishonourable manner. About 11 o'clock Dr. Wallace, M.P. for East Edinburgh, rose to speak. But he had only uttered a few sentences when he faltered, became mute, and sank into his seat. John Burns came up and literally carried him out of the House. He was taken to the Westminster Hospital hard by, but died before morning. He was a man of great talent and of quaint originality; some of his speeches—though not of the ordinary Parliamentary type—being most remarkable.

‘I was sitting on the same bench from which he rose—not far off him—and his last words before he faltered made an abiding impression upon me. Speaking against the desecration of the Mahdi's tomb, he said that it might be considered expedient to do it, but, if it were not right, it should not have been done “on any consideration.” I thought that there might have been many “last words” less satisfactory than these.

‘I went pretty early the next morning to the Hospital to ask after him, but met Lord Rosebery in the doorway coming out, who told me that all was over. It struck me as a kind trait in Lord Rosebery's character, for he must have hurried off almost instantly he heard of the attack to make enquiries.

‘I think there is nobody left in the House so original as was Dr. Wallace. Birrell is not in the House at the time when I write (1904), but his originality is not exactly of the same type as that of Wallace—perhaps better, but that I am not here discussing.

‘Coming to the Session of 1900 I feel averse to dwelling on it, for it was a grievous time, the horror of the wicked war more or less deadening or deteriorating all our proceedings. One thing of an interesting nature was that the Irish Nationalist Members were sound on the question and made many and powerful speeches against the war; speeches which, had the nation been in a sane mind—which no nation is when at war—would have been applauded and appreciated.

‘A few Radicals continued their opposition; Lloyd-George

among the number, who, one night made such an eloquent and impassioned attack upon our War-policy that, when he sat down, Harcourt, I believe, passed a piece of paper down to him with the words : " A speech worthy of Grattan." But if Grattan were to rise from the dead or any one else, they could not stop the British Nation when once it has set its heart on slaughter.

' One of the most interesting debates was the one in which D. A. Thomas<sup>1</sup> and S. T. Evans<sup>2</sup>—the latter in a most brilliant speech—attempted to get further enquiry into the celebrated Select Committee on the Jameson Raid. The case they made out *prima facie* against Chamberlain of being art and part in that infamy was strong. But he bluffed and bounced as usual, and the House decided on no further enquiry.

' Ever and anon, when we began to get the better of the Boers and news came of these successes, the " discerning public " devoted themselves to frantic antics in the streets, yelling and dancing about like Red Indians. This I believe is called " Patriotism " or " Imperialism." On one occasion we captured the force of a Boer Commander called Cronje. Our Commander-in-Chief, in sending his despatch home with the news of the success, dated it : " Majuba Day "—as fine a piece of humiliating snobbery as I remember—but just the thing to please the people in their then mood. The whole spirit of fair play which we were accustomed to associate with Englishmen seemed to have vanished under the War-fever. Hunting the friends of peace about the streets, breaking up their meetings and smashing their windows, were at this period tolerably common occurrences. The Press almost openly encouraged these doings, and worse than that—they were virtually condoned in the House of Commons itself. Once when they were brought to the notice of the Government, Balfour made a kind of defence of the proceedings in such a

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Merthyr Tydfil.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for Mid Glamorganshire; Solicitor-General 1908.



speech as I hope may never again be heard in the House of Commons.

‘ These things I allude to in these rapidly closing memoirs, as such incidents show better than anything else the depths of humiliation into which war casts all those who support it. I myself only once got mixed up in any of these Peace riots. We had an anti-war meeting at Exeter Hall. Inside the Hall, we managed to maintain some sort of order ; but a large mob outside forced itself into the building, and stormed the staircase in the attempt to reach us. At one moment some of these patriotic roughs did manage to push on to the Hall itself, but were soon ejected by our people, though how they did it is to me to this day a mystery. But the strife and struggle on the staircase continued to be so violent that we had rapidly to wind up the proceedings. I managed to secure a cab in a back street adjoining the Hall, and drove down to the House, where, after midnight, to an unsympathetic audience I gave a short account of the storming of Exeter Hall, and obtained from Sir Matthew White Ridley (the Home Secretary) an assurance that he would give a hint to the police to be more vigilant in such cases.

‘ These semi-warlike affairs were repulsive enough in their way. I should think that a real battle must be as near a representation of Hell as we can get on Earth. Yet pictures of battles and of men dying in torment and agony are the most popular of all the pictures which embellish our illustrated papers. Then this nation of “ unctuous rectitudinarians ” hastens to Church on Sundays and prays—“ Give peace in our time, O Lord.” These things seem more and more inexplicable, the older one grows. Probably there are some young men who can explain them.

‘ On the 25th of June, occurred one of the most curious and interesting debates and divisions in which I ever participated. The vote for the Colonial Office came on, and I took the opportunity of moving a reduction of 100*l.* in the



salary of the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Chamberlain. I find, on looking back, that the reason which I gave for my motion was contained in the last sentences of my speech. I reproduce them :—"That is the course which the Colonial Secretary has now taken, and by taking it he has brought discredit, degradation, demoralization, and probably disaster, on this country. For that reason I say he deserves the censure of every friend of humanity, peace, and justice."

'And I say so still (1904). But my speech was of little moment, though the Division was one of the most curious that has ever taken place in the House of Commons. The Liberal Party divided itself into—roughly—three equal portions. One third followed Sir H. C.-Bannerman and abstained from voting, one-third voted with me, and one-third voted with the Government.

'Looking back at this incident, one may perhaps see the reason of the impotency of the Liberal Party all through the War. Were not the words uttered to Reuben—"unstable as water thou shalt not excel"? It seems to me clear that because they bowed before the War-blast they lost for a time, and perhaps have lost even now, the power of guiding public events in any good direction. People very naturally said "the men who thoroughly believe in the War and are prepared to carry it out whole-heartedly are more to be trusted than those who"—to use a brilliant epigram since invented—"have nailed their colours to the fence."

'I am getting now into quite modern times and must be brief and cautious—if I can.

'The General Election came in September 1900. The general idea set afloat by the Government, inspired by Mr. Chamberlain, was that every one who objected to shooting Boers, burning their houses, and devastating their farms, was a "traitor." This cry succeeded admirably and secured for them at the Polls a majority of 134, a memorable result of what was called the "Khaki Election."

‘Very naturally, I being a prominent “Pro-Boer”—as every one was called who wished to do justice in the Transvaal—fell a victim in my old Cockermouth constituency. But the majority against me was only small—209—and, although beaten, I polled upwards of 4,000 votes.

‘Never shall I forget that poll. Here was mainly a working class and mining constituency which had the sense and moral courage to vote for Peace almost in sufficient numbers for success, at a moment when it appeared as though the whole nation were wholly given up to the worship of Baal. Though beaten, I consider that this was the most significant, and perhaps even satisfactory, poll which was ever cast for me.

‘Mr. Bright used to talk about a “residuum” in the Electorate. But here was a residuum indeed, and one which made one hope and believe that there was still at bottom in the hearts of the people a love of Truth and Peace and Justice.’

Here ends Sir Wilfrid Lawson’s narrative, as arranged for the Press under his own supervision. The estimate which others formed of his character and work must be given later on; but this is a suitable point for the reproduction of a remarkable eulogy pronounced on the occasion of his defeat by a weekly paper wholly uncommitted either to his general politics or to his special opinions:—

‘In our schooldays we used to read of a classical worthy whose death was a cause of weeping to many good men. The political death of Sir Wilfrid Lawson is attended by similar consequences. To the men of the moment, Sir Wilfrid is chiefly known as pro-Boer and anti-everything else; a Little Englander, a Peace-at-any-Price Man, a would-be destroyer of the Established Church, the House of Lords, the Liquor-Traffic, and several other institutions scarcely less robust. All this is true enough, but it gives only an imperfect im-

pression of a remarkable character and a unique career. Let us look back over an interspace of forty years, and we see in the House of Commons a small band of eager Radicals, extremely sick of Lord Palmerston's obsolete Whiggery, and building all their hopes of "a good time coming" on Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright. Among them is the new Member for Carlisle, for whom old Parliamentary hands are already beginning to predict a career. He is a young man, very good-looking, very well dressed, a good deal of a sportsman, and rather a dandy; the bearer of an honoured name, and the heir to great estates; a clever, fluent, and humorous speaker, and nephew and colleague of Sir James Graham (whose powers of administration Mr. Gladstone used so vehemently to extol). This was Mr. Wilfrid Lawson; and certainly, if Parliamentary success, in the vulgar sense of the Office-Seeker, had been his object, no young man in the House was better equipped for attaining it. But Mr. Lawson had entered Parliament with a very different view. His nature was simple and intense. He thought he saw in the Liquor-Traffic the great moral and material curse of England; and he devoted all his powers of body and mind—all he had, all he was, all he could do—to the work of destroying it.

'That was forty years ago, and the task is not yet accomplished. Perhaps it is of superhuman difficulty. Certainly it is beyond the scope of one man's endeavour. But, be the issue what it may, Sir Wilfrid's devotion to the cause deserves to be ranked with the finest instances of self-sacrifice for a high end. Now, at the darkest moment of his electoral fortunes, I salute the most single-minded and disinterested politician whom it has ever been my happiness to know.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> G. W. E. R. in *The Pilot*, October 13, 1900.

It now remains only to narrate the brief but not uneventful remainder of Sir Wilfrid Lawson's career.

Liberated, by the General Election of 1900, from the duty of Parliamentary attendance, he betook himself at once to the rural and domestic life which he so thoroughly enjoyed, and resumed all his old activities on behalf of good causes and local interests. 'The tumult and the shouting' consequent on the Khaki victory at the polls had scarcely died away when the nation was recalled to its senses by a sudden consciousness of impending change. Early in January, 1901, it became known that Queen Victoria's health was rapidly failing, and after a few days' intense and universal anxiety we heard that all was over. 'The Queen is dead.' As men repeated the words, they looked at one another in a kind of stupefaction. The social and political order in which they had been born and had lived their lives was instantly and finally shattered. It was as though the sun had failed in the heavens, or some great land-mark of the natural world had been suddenly removed. Lawson noted in his journal—'On the 2nd of February took place the Queen's funeral, one of the most marvellous sights ever seen in London, or in the world.' But he was not among the eye-witnesses of it, for on the previous day he had left England with his family on a visit to Mentone.

'Sir Wilfrid,' we are told, 'never cared much for travelling or for going abroad, but his several visits to the Riviera for his health always benefited him very greatly. What he disliked most was being without his daily paper, and getting all the news a day or two days late.'

Having spent a life-time in Parliament, Lawson had scarcely ever enjoyed 'the sweet of the year' in his beautiful home, and therefore the summer of 1901, which he was able to spend at Brayton, was to him a season of very special happiness. All through the autumn and winter he was incessantly active, and, in spite of his more than seventy years, the



enormous number of meetings which he attended never seemed to tire him. As the spring of 1902 advanced, he began to see, with profound relief, the foreshadowings of the peace which was concluded on the 1st of June. 'This was a great joy, as the feeling of all the iniquity causing, and caused by, the war had been a real torture to him ever since it began.'

Reference has been made more than once in the preceding pages to Mr. William Sproston Caine, M.P. He was a man of great vigour and enthusiasm; a changeable politician, but a consistent and devoted worker in the cause of Temperance. Having represented various constituencies, he was returned in 1900 for the Camborne Division of Cornwall. He died on the 17th of March, 1903, and Lawson was asked to stand for the vacant seat. The offer was made under peculiarly acceptable conditions, for it was understood that, if he secured the seat, he should be at liberty, when the next election occurred, to return to his old constituents in the Cocker-mouth Division. Still, from Cumberland to Cornwall was a far cry; and, as Lawson had never before stood for any but a Cumbrian constituency, he felt himself at first a stranger in a strange land. But not for long. His geniality, his humour, his sweet temper, and his intense enthusiasm for the Liberal cause, soon attracted a host of friends and supporters to his standard. 'He entered into the contest with the most wonderful vigour; to be in the thick of a political fight was meat and drink to him, and seemed to give him a new lease of life.'

On the 8th of April he was returned as Member for the Camborne Division, and his homeward journey was a kind of triumphal progress. He stopped on his way to address a great gathering of Good Templars at Sheffield, where he was received with unbounded enthusiasm. 'Such a tumultuous wave of feeling passed through the audience when he appeared on the platform that it seemed as though they would never stop cheering, and could never adequately show their

affectionate devotion and admiration for their beloved leader. It was a scene never to be forgotten.' After this triumph at Sheffield he resumed his journey to Brayton. When he arrived at home it was pitch-dark, with a violent snow-storm raging; but still the people turned out in hundreds, took the horses out, dragged the carriage from the station to the house, and remained cheering in the court-yard long after their hero had vanished from sight.

'In spite of his seventy-three years he seemed none the worse for his arduous campaign, and in fact it seemed to have made him younger than ever; and returning to his beloved House of Commons was as the breath of life to him.' He threw himself into his parliamentary work with all his characteristic thoroughness, and hardly ever missed a day's attendance at the House, or failed to take part in a division; and so he passed through the Sessions of 1903, -4, and -5.

The Conservative Government, which had lasted ever since June, 1895, was now in evil case. The party which it was supposed to lead was cleft in twain by the Fiscal controversy. There was a multiplicity of leaders, who enounced various and conflicting theories; and, whenever the Prime Minister intervened in debate, he only made confusion worse confounded and darkened counsel by the multitude of words.

Lawson, of course, was a Free Trader to the backbone, and he looked forward to the fight, which could not be long postponed, with the exhilarating sense of striking one more blow for a cause which from his youth upwards he had loved and served.

For the old flags reel, and the old drums rattle,  
As once in my life they throbbed and reeled;  
I have found my youth in this last, long, battle,  
I have found my heart on the battle-field.

On the 4th of December, 1905, the Tory Government resigned. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, of whom, through

the dark days of the South African War and amid all the machinations of the 'Liberal League,' Lawson had been a loyal and unswerving disciple, became Prime Minister; and on the 8th of January, 1906, the Khaki Parliament of 1900 was dissolved.

By virtue of the arrangement with Camborne, Lawson was now free to contest the Cokermonth Division of Cumberland, and the enthusiasm of the Liberal Party in the constituency knew no bounds. After an arduous struggle of several weeks he was returned at the head of the poll. 'The seat was won back again to its old allegiance, and his supporters went almost mad with delight. On the evening of the declaration of the poll, after a busy and arduous day in which he had spoken six or seven times, he nevertheless attended a concert at Aspatria in aid of the Band of Hope. On his leaving the concert, his horses were taken out, and he and Lady Lawson were dragged the two miles up to Brayton, surrounded by an immense and ever-increasing crowd. The whole weird scene was lit by torches. It was computed that there were at least 2,000 people there—none of them his constituents (for Brayton is in the Eskdale Division)—but mainly his friends and neighbours from all around. It was an impressive and touching sign of the immense and universal respect in which he was held.'

Immediately after the election, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman offered Lawson the dignity of a Privy Councillorship, but it was declined on the ground that, 'if a man did his duty, it brought its own reward with it.' His family only heard of the proffered honour after it had been declined.

Lawson entered the Parliament of 1906 full of enthusiasm and hope, rejoicing that the huge majority which the Liberals had obtained was pledged to all the reforms that lay closest to his heart, and confident that the special cause to which he had given his life was now nearing victory.

It is difficult to believe that the Education Bill, which was

the first work of the new Government, excited any very lively emotions in Lawson's breast; but he voted for the Second Reading, presumably on the ground of its supposed conformity with Liberal principles, and took his own line in Committee. On the 25th of June, when the Fourth Clause—famous in its day, and now forgotten—was under discussion, Lawson, sitting next to his staunch friend Sir Francis Channing,<sup>1</sup> pencilled the following lines on the back of his Order-Paper and handed them to his neighbour. As far as can be ascertained, they are the last lines which the 'Lobby Laureate' ever wrote.

#### THE BILL.

It's a very good Bill in its way,  
Though it alters its shape every day.

But everything's meant  
With the best of intent,  
Whatever the critics may say.

There's a bit for the Papist, a bit for the Jew,  
A bit for the stern Nonconformist man too—

There's a bit for the Parson's assistance,  
And a bit to help Passive Resistance;  
But, above all beside, whatever we've tried,  
On Religion we place chief insistence.

We don't for ourselves demand it—not we—  
But it's all for the good of the children, you see;  
For them we debate and squabble and fight;  
If the children are pious, then all will come right.

And so without ending,  
We'll go on amending;  
Through good and through ill  
We'll stick to the Bill,  
Our faith in its future unending.

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for East Northamptonshire.



And now our narrative is nearly at its close. For some time past Lawson's constitution, by nature magnificent, had begun to show signs of the wear and tear inseparable from fifty years of strenuous labour and unstinted endurance. He had long given up hunting, and latterly did not even ride; but he went on shooting regularly to the end. In the autumn of 1905, when he had turned seventy-six, he was one of the guns in a two days' shooting-party at Brayton—'being out all day and taking his part with the youngest present.' But at the end of the second day, as he was walking home with his eldest son, he said, 'I've shot my last shot.'

During the session of 1906 some of his friends thought that they saw signs of diminished strength; but there were no symptoms of active illness, and no one dreamed that the end was near at hand.

On the 29th of June, though confessing that he felt weary, he insisted on going down to the House and recording his vote—the last he ever gave—in a division on Clause 4 of the Education Bill. From the House he returned to No. 18 Ovington Square, where he had lived for the session, went to bed, and never rose again. 'The doctor called it bronchitis, but it was more like the tired warrior laying down his arms in the fulness of time, having fought the good fight.'

He died quite quietly in the early morning of Sunday, 1st of July, and was buried on the 5th of July in the churchyard of Aspatria, in which parish Brayton is situate.

Perhaps the following eulogium may not unfitly close this chapter :—

'Another life has reached the sea. Again we are in the presence of that eternal peace we call death. My life has been rich in friends, but I never had a better or a truer one

than he who lies silent here. He was as steadfast, as faithful as the stars. Sir Wilfrid Lawson was an absolutely honest man. His word was gold. His promise was fulfilment. Never has there been, there never will be on this poor earth anything nobler than an honest, loving soul. Differ from his policy as we may, Sir Wilfrid Lawson was as generous as autumn, as hospitable as summer, and as tender as a day in June. He forgot only himself, and asked favours only for others; he begged for the opportunity to do good. No man has ever slept in death who nearer lived his creed. I have known him for many years, and have yet to hear a word spoken of him except in praise. His life was full of honour, of kindness, and of helpful deeds; besides all, his soul was free. He feared nothing except to do wrong. He was a believer in the gospel of help and hope. He knew how much better, how much more sacred, a kind act was than any theory the brain hath wrought. The good are the noble. His life filled the lives of others with sunshine; he has left a legacy of glory to his survivors. If there be another world, another life beyond the shore of this—if the great and good who die upon this orb are there—then among them stands Sir Wilfrid Lawson. To me this world is growing poor; new friends can never fill the places of the old. The idea of immortality, that, like a sea, has ebbed and flowed in the human heart, with its countless waves of hope and fear, beating against the shores and rocks of time and fate, was not born of any book, of any creed, nor of any religion; it was born of human affection. And it will continue to ebb and flow beneath the mists of cloud and darkness as long as love kisses the lips of death. It is the rainbow of hope shining upon the tears of grief.'

JOHN WYNN.

Swindon: July 2, 1906.

## CHAPTER XII

## A COMRADE'S TRIBUTE

IN allotting the principal place in this book to the 'Reminiscences' which Sir Wilfrid Lawson himself compiled, I believe that I have done what he would have desired. His object in compiling those Reminiscences was, as he expressly said, to record 'certain Parliamentary and public incidents' of which he had been a spectator, and in most of which he had borne a strenuous part. It therefore seemed obvious to me, and to those who had the best right to judge, that the Reminiscences should figure in the forefront of the book; but I felt not less convinced that any who should follow with interest and sympathy the record of what Lawson did would wish to learn, on the testimony of those who knew him best, what manner of man he was, and to read the impressions which he has left graven on the hearts of his friends. Some such testimonies I shall now append; reserving to myself the privilege of the final word.

In the endeavour to place a sketch of Lawson's character before my readers, I am under peculiar obligations to my friend Sir Francis Channing, M.P. Sir Francis entered Parliament at the General Election of 1885; and between him and Wilfrid Lawson there soon arose a peculiarly strong and cordial affection, which, originating in political agreement, soon extended to all the deepest and highest concerns of human life. In replying to my request for some reminiscences of the friend whom we have lost, Sir Francis wrote: 'I enclose some most imperfect notes, giving, in the poorest way, I fear, some of the impressions of my

dear old friend which have sunk deepest in my mind, and some little incidents of our long comradeship at the House—one of the most precious privileges of my life. I feel that these notes are wholly inadequate to convey what his friendship meant to me, and how cold and dreary Parliament has seemed since he was taken. Sir Wilfrid Lawson was one of the most beautiful spirits I have ever known; so fearless, so full of fine moral indignation against evil, and yet so gentle, so generous, so full of the sweetness of a self-restrained and forbearing sense of humanity and kindness.

‘On one of my visits to Brayton—September 1905—Lawson was sitting with me on a stone bench in the garden, while the soft afternoon sun played upon us. He fell gently to sleep for a while, and I sat watching his finely drawn, loyal, kindly face with the half-smile that ever seemed upon it. When he woke, he seemed to have a glow of bright fancy upon him; and, looking at the delicate shades of light in the Western sky approaching sunset, he quoted these four lines :

‘Dreams are but lights of brighter skies,  
Too dazzling for our mortal eyes,  
And, when we see their flashing beams,  
We turn aside, and call them Dreams.’

The emotional and poetic side of Lawson’s nature which the foregoing incident illustrates was combined with an intense and vigorous practicalness. There was in him the combination of the Mystic and the Man of Action which has been noted by biographers in so many leaders of mankind, from Cromwell and Wesley to Gladstone and Bishop Wilkin-son. For the practical side of Lawson’s nature I turn again to the testimony of Sir Francis Channing.

‘The thing I felt most strongly, was the intentness of his spirit on each thing and question and man that came in his way each day—the alertness and springiness of his nature—



even in the very last few weeks of his life I never knew a man give such close attention to each detail of a Parliamentary day. He never failed to be in his place from the beginning of the sitting, noted each question on the paper with closest interest, and was always instantly ready for any new, or humorous, situation. Every day he would catch the note of some new human aberration and hit it off in verse—often hasty—always with a sly touch of humour, often with a neat turn of epigram, but always immolating on the instant what was false, or base, or a betrayal of the ideal as it lived to him. Many hundreds of these verses in earlier years written on the backs of the Order-Papers, often on notepaper he brought in from the lobbies, must be extant among the papers of friends. Nearly all the verses which have appeared in a volume illustrated by Sir Francis C. Gould were thus struck off in pencil, as he sat musing in his corner seat. He never missed a point in debate, and took up the humorous side of a situation at a flash. I remember one night after dinner, an old Conservative Member who was certainly not a teetotaller—a well-known character in the House at that time—intervened in a Temperance debate, and made the infelicitous remark that he was “full of the subject”—a hit Sir Wilfrid cherished and made a text of. Some of his cleverest verses were of course not written in the House, but most of them were.

‘The other point which struck me most forcibly was the extraordinary hopefulness of his nature. Till the South African War this seemed unbroken and untroubled, though of course I know he keenly suffered at every similar crisis—the Egyptian War, the Soudan, &c., being continual causes of sadness, almost of exasperation. But till then it seemed to me that his faith in the soundness of instinct in the heart of the people remained unshaken, and unshakable. This earnest faith in the true principle of incorruptible democracy was of course the secret of his complete reliance on the principle of Local Option or Local Veto, though the very

limitation of this latter proposal indicates, of course, a doubt as to whether Local Option may lead for right or wrong, if it is a real option and not merely the power to say No. But on the South African War his convictions were so absolutely decisive and uncompromising that his impatience with the popular vote in support of the War in 1900 drove him into a profound pessimism which saddened him and at times saddened his friends too. It was not his own disappointment in being driven from Parliament by the election of 1900. That was a bitter strain of course, but it was like a deadly blow to his democratic faith to dwell, as he often did even after his return for Camborne in 1903, on the temper of the people, who could not and would not understand the right, and would throw their force on the side of evil! He often said: "They have willed it." Blind to faith and to justice, they had been swept away by passion and ignorant prejudice and base sentiments.

'To those who loved his pure and simple nature, and realized what it is for such natures to lose touch for a while on their central principle of faith in the average and collective loyalty of human nature to its ideals, it will always be the most delightful of memories to dwell again and again on his joyous and intensely felt renewal of his early faiths and hopes, the elimination of doubt and dread and distrust in those glorious months of the great revival of 1906. He had taken intense daily interest in every move of the game from his re-election for Camborne in 1903 up to the dissolution. The Camborne election was announced on the very day Mr. Chamberlain returned from South Africa—the first news that came to him. Sir Wilfrid was one of many who thought that Mr. Chamberlain had been driven to resort to the new cry of Protection by his perception that his policy in South Africa had been a mistake, and had brought untold loss and disaster, and could never retain the confidence of the English people whom he had misled. Thus Camborne precipitated the plunge and made Chamberlain more eager to push, drive, and cajole his

colleagues into the revival of Protection, on many grounds doubtless, but tactically as a means of diverting popular attention from a scene of disastrous and continuous loss to dreams of expansive prosperity. I rarely saw him so continuously as during this period. The Camborne struggle had come suddenly with the sad death of our dear old friend Caine, in the cold, stormy spring. Yet Lawson did not shrink from the most constant and severe exposure in a brilliant and exhausting campaign. His friends were in despair when he boldly reiterated his absolutely uncompromising views upon the war, refusing to have anything to do with Annexation, and expressing his readiness for giving the Boers something in the nature of Home Rule. It was expected that the frantic appeals to patriots to rend him in pieces might result in his defeat, but he raised the majority (like many others even in 1900 who took their whole heart in their hands and stood firm to principles) to just seven times that of Mr. Caine in 1900—thus accurately gauging the swing of opinion, and in his wise handling of the question of future South African Government, forecasting the splendid policy of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman in 1906.

‘Those who, like myself, discussed every shade of every one of these questions with him day by day, drew fresh inspiration from his return, full of renewed vitality and interests, though his return of complete faith that the democracy would come out right was slow.

‘He, after all, had a tremendous amount of the school-boy in him at times. It was a real pleasure to him to watch, and to some extent enter into the strategy started by young Liberal bloods, to trip up and expose the hollow absurdities and evasions of the “Hanky-Panky” alliance, as he called it, in the Sessions of 1904 and 1905. The spice of real fun and boyish pranks came to him with zest.

‘Another period I remember most keenly was the time of the Balfour Licensing Bill of 1904. He was untiring, inexhaustible, full of continuous application and energy. He was



always—even with his great self-confidence, and with the sense of duty, of a mission that had to be carried out, and with his transparent sense of his own capacity to put a truth in a telling and trenchant way—extremely modest and hesitating as to actually putting himself before the House. He has often been accused of over self-assertion, of something not dissociated from personal vanity. That in a way is true of all men of real force, originality and power, of which it is impossible for them to be unconscious, and which “*will out*,” as an irrepressible factor in the evolution of things. But his modesty often struck me. He would ask with evident sincerity and hesitation, “Do you think they (the House) would stand something from me?” mentioning briefly, often humorously, his line of projected argument. I think one of his most prominent characteristics, like Gladstone’s, was his extreme considerateness for others. For the House itself, he had a reverent regard. Like Harcourt, his highest ambition was to “stand well with the House.” Even if he felt himself about to speak, or even compelled to speak, in a contrary sense to the prevailing opinion, while he would not compromise his line of thought by a single word, he would always speak with a perfect deference and consideration. This consideration for others was often shown when any discussion arose between him and his friends as to conduct or words of others which seemed open to criticism. I remember well in the case of a prominent Member of the Party who refused to vote with the Party against the Licensing Bill of 1904, and was vehemently condemned by some friends of Temperance, how he expressed the calmer view that one could not quite interpret the motives of others, and that the more generous interpretation should be made. This struck me profoundly as coming from the keenest Temperance advocate and partisan in the House.

‘Another very beautiful little trait was as to the corner seat, which I had willingly surrendered to him after the with-



drawal of William Rathbone<sup>1</sup> in 1895, with whom I had sat before, and whom I had, as was the usual custom, succeeded when he left. He delighted in this corner seat on the third Bench, and, regardless of the strict rules of order, he and I would alternately secure these two seats at the end of the coveted bench. I jokingly called it "storming the Quadrilateral" or "entrenching the position," and the hint would often be passed a day or two before by note or postcard. During these years I generally drove back with him in either our own carriages or cabs. One year he had taken a house at the lower part of Grosvenor Gardens—a house which I think at that time still belonged to the late Sir Joseph Pease.<sup>2</sup> "Grosvenor Gardens," we found, was a tremendous puzzle to the cabmen. We called the lower end passing Victoria Station, "Cape Horn," and wondered each night whether the cabman would negotiate Cape Horn properly, or find his way round by the Straits of Magellan or land us in Tierra del Fuego! Each day his life was full of pleasant little touches of fun, to which I tried to contribute my share from time to time, perhaps not entirely without success. Oh! the endless flow of gay stories which came each day in our seats, or in the tea-room, or sometimes in the cab-journey home. But I am coming to the point at which I began. Members were constantly taking the seat during Sir Wilfrid's absence. Most M.P.'s are somewhat abrupt in turning out intruders from seats they habitually occupy or have usually taken. Again and again have I seen Lawson refrain from the slightest hint and waiting gently near by till the idea might dawn on the man who was in his seat to look round and see that he might as well give it up. It was very characteristic, and led me and other friends often ourselves to give the necessary hint to the man in possession, who would instantly decamp, for no one was more respected and beloved in the House. I wish I

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for North Carnarvonshire.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for the Barnard Castle Division.

could recover all his verses which I must have got copies of. I have only a few of the many that came into my hands. One little skit on ——'s false position as Unionist member for ——, and the opinions desperately inconsistent to all the views held by his father and himself that he was driven to hold for a time, was splendid. It was about a town in West Africa and how —— stood by and saw the "slaughtered blacks" "piled up in stacks," &c., &c., full of wit and sarcasm, but without a touch of ill humour and pointing naturally to the inevitable reconversion of this son of Peace and Justice to the true creed—a forecast absolutely accurate.

'Lawson was an enthusiast of enthusiasts, but he was also a man of the shrewdest common-sense and absolutely sound judgment. Doubtless many of his friends must have consulted him on many things as I constantly did. On any practical point relating to conduct and the decision of important matters, I always found his tact and judgment were unerring.

'In speech, he sometimes fell into extreme phrases which did him harm. On one occasion early in 1900, when the Colonial vote was on, and I, with fervent devotion to the cause, had put down a motion to reduce Chamberlain's salary, I yielded to him the post of honour and he moved the reduction which stood in my name and even applied the term "Boxers," then odious from its Chinese associations, to the British troops in South Africa; and this doubtless helped to bring his defeat in the Khaki election a few months after. He and I in this debate both resisted direct appeals from C.-B. and "Bob Reid" <sup>1</sup> not to divide on this question, as we considered that the protest was imperative. But Lawson had been compelled to leave the House and London and to travel north shortly after the debate was begun by him. He was sharply criticized for this in the Press, I believe. But he had no alternative. His engagement in the North was imperative. He had not the slightest wish to shrink from the division,

<sup>1</sup> Lord Chancellor Loreburn, 1905.

and it was wholly his own doing that he had assumed the responsibility of moving the reduction himself.

‘I have alluded to his intense, exuberant delight in the Parliament of 1906. He did not attempt to take part in the extraordinary scrimmage at midnight before the new House met for the first time. Half a dozen friends, including myself, had promised to secure his old corner—on the new side—opposite to the seats we two had occupied off and on for ten or twelve years. But in the rush they were seized by some new arrivals, who only yielded them up when they were told that Lawson and I had had them before. The generosity and kindness of the new House has been in this respect, under the circumstances of the great majority, quite remarkable.

‘Sir Wilfrid proposed the re-election of the Speaker (Mr. J. W. Lowther) in a most felicitous speech. He was constant, incessant, eager, in close attendance and rapt attention to each new debate. From the first I begged him not to come back to the House after dinner, but no young Member in his first session could have given more loyal and devoted discharge of his duties.

‘I recall especially, on the night when decrease of armaments was pressed for, how intensely he delighted in the speech of Sir Edward Grey, which practically pledged even his wing of the party to reduction. Night after night the noblest and truest ideals of Liberalism were affirmed either by unchallenged Resolutions of the House, or by overwhelming majorities. Sir Wilfrid was cool, collected, but supremely happy. When C.-B. assured the great deputation that a real Temperance Bill would be the first measure of the coming Session, and when the great Temperance motion (I forget its terms) got its day, and its day recorded the splendid majority in favour of bold and decisive policies of suppressing the Drink-evil, he was overjoyed. He would say to me, “Ah! there’s no good thing which this Parliament cannot and will not do.”

It was a time of bright sunshine, of hope, of intense moral consolation, and of confident expansion.’<sup>1</sup>

Lawson abounded, as all the world knows, in playfulness and fun, and the following incident, recorded in this connexion, by Sir Francis Channing, aptly illustrates the lighter side of his character.

‘Did I ever tell you of his little by-play with the seat-man in the Park the Sunday before he died? He was sitting with my daughter and myself just under the Achilles statue. The seat-man came along, and Lawson proffered him, as his ticket, a tiny red leaflet (“What Liberals had done,” I think, or “What Tories had left undone”) shaped like the usual seat-ticket, and then told him with sublime gravity that he had better keep it. As he turned to go away, after a little playful talk, the man touched his hat, and answered Lawson by saying, “Thank you, *General*.” How gaily Lawson laughed! A few minutes later, we all walked down Grosvenor Place, and he went into the Wellington Club, and parted from us with a cheery wave of his hand. That afternoon he had been telling us one story after another—some of them I had never heard before. He was extremely gay and sunshiny; but he caught cold, I think, the day after.’

Mr. Birrell’s ill-starred Education Bill was then in Committee. It formed, according to Sir Francis Channing, the one exception to the satisfaction with which Lawson regarded the legislative programme of the new Government.

‘Taking the strongest view in opposition to giving power and money to sectarianism, he strongly dissented from Mr. Birrell’s concessions on Clause 4. I vainly tried to dissuade

<sup>1</sup> In view of what so soon happened, it is worth noting that on Monday, May 7, Lawson wrote in his journal: ‘Absent from the House by doctor’s orders, owing to shortness of breath.’ On Tuesday and Wednesday he was still absent, but on Thursday, May 10, he wrote: ‘I got down in the afternoon.’ That evening he voted for the Second Reading of the Education Bill, and added in his journal: ‘Birrell was strong in common sense and human feeling, in his hour’s winding-up.’





SIR WILFRID LAWSON

1906

*From a Photograph by Lafayette*



him from stopping at the House to vote. It was doubtless the prolonged discussion on this Clause, and the exhausting pressure of the divisions at a late hour, which dangerously overtaxed his strength. I remember how he persisted that Wednesday night, June 27, 1906, in voting in nearly all the divisions.<sup>1</sup> Already in the preceding winter he had one serious, though short, failure of strength. On the Thursday afternoon, he was in his usual place following the questions and now and again saying some bright, pleasant thing, but he seemed weak and ill, and had a slight cold. I begged him, as he drove me back in his brougham, not to come back that night after dinner, and he at last consented. At my door he gave a gentle wave of his hand through the window, and a bright, though tired, smile, and he was gone. On Friday evening I heard from his daughter, that he was in his room, but not thought seriously ill, though he had bronchitis. On Sunday morning, when I sent round to 18 Ovington Square to ask about him, the message that all was over but a few hours before came as an almost unbelievable shock.'

<sup>1</sup> The last two entries in Lawson's Parliamentary journal run as follows:—'*Wednesday, June 27.* Another day on the Education Bill. Much the usual sort of proceedings, Balfour and his retinue being very busy in finding every kind of difficulty in connexion with the plan for taking the opinion of the parents by ballot. There were four divisions before the guillotine fell at 10.30. One I missed, being at home at dinner. One by Villiers—ayes, 344; noes, 87. Another by E. Cecil—ayes, 312; noes, 142. Another by Sir T. Esmonde—ayes, 158; noes, 295. On the eve of guillotine there was a division on an amendment of Lord R. Cecil—ayes, 367; noes, 197. Then the guillotine fell, and we divided on an amendment of Birrell's to Clause 4—ayes, 360; noes, 200. Then, on a ditto—ayes, 318; noes, 161. Another, that one of Birrell's amendments be made—ayes, 392; noes, 156. Another, ditto—ayes, 444; noes, 118. Then on Clause 4 itself—ayes, 415; noes, 138. There was yet another amendment of Birrell's on Clause 5—ayes, 352; noes, 182. Then we got to bed at 12.20.

'My line in all this voting was to support the Government in their attempt to minimize the evils of Clause 4; but to vote against the clause when it came up, it being still very objectionable.

'*Thursday, June 28.*—The afternoon was occupied by Irish Estimates, the Irishmen telling their old story at great length.'

## CHAPTER XIII

## LIFE AT HOME

It has been truly observed that there are some characters which appear to the best advantage when they are seen on distant heights, elevated by intellectual eminence above the range of scrutiny, or shrouded from searching observation by the misty glamour of great station and great affairs. Others excel in the 'middle distance' of official intercourse, and in the friendly but not intimate relations of professional and public life. But the noblest natures are those which are seen at their best in the close communion of the home. Bearing this truth in mind, I have sought assistance in this portion of my task from some who, through the opportunities of relationship or duty, were enabled to observe at close quarters the private and domestic life of the Lawsons' home at Brayton. One of these writes as follows :

'I have already stated that Sir Wilfrid never cared much for travelling or for going abroad. What he disliked most was being without his daily paper. He had an immense fondness always for a newspaper, and, when he went a railway journey, used to buy nearly every paper under the sun, of all and every shade of opinion, never omitting *Tit Bits*, which he used always to bring or send back to an old maidservant at Brayton, as she was so fond of it. He hardly ever missed a day or a division in the House of Commons if he could possibly help it, and, when not in London, all the rest of his time was spent at Brayton. Here he



delighted to be surrounded by his grandchildren, and there was no prettier sight than to see him with one on his knee and the others sitting round him, whilst he told them stories. He was always a great lover of children, and all children worshipped him. He would tell them the most wonderful stories, which never had any ending, but would go on being “ continued in our next ” *ad infinitum*, and were the perpetual delight and joy of all who heard them. With his own children he was ever the life and soul of all their games. One particular game of “ Lions,” which consisted in a sort of hide-and-seek all over the house, had been invented by him ; it never failed in its popularity and was ever entered into with the greatest zest by both old and young. No one was allowed to shirk, and visitors and guests were all alike pressed into the service, until “ Lions ” became quite a celebrated and recognized institution. There was one celebrated game in which two Canons of the Church, a distinguished Doctor, and several staid and middle-aged Members of Parliament, all took part, and entered into the spirit of the thing with the youngest child there.

‘ Sir Wilfrid used to play lawn-tennis until quite within a few years of his death, though billiards was ever his chief recreation ; of that he was never tired, especially if the player was much better than himself, when he would play game after game, tiring his adversary out, whilst he was as fresh and keen as ever.

‘ He retained his heart of a little child to the end, and this was one of the secrets of the great love with which he inspired all who came in contact with him. This, and his absolute single-mindedness and honesty of purpose, coupled with his transparent sincerity, were part of the foundation for the high esteem and affection in which he was held by all who knew him or came in any way into touch with him.’

The Rev. Gerald M. L. Reade, Vicar of Alfington, S. Devon, sends me the following sketch, prefixing to it these gracious

words : ‘ My only fear is that I cannot do justice to a subject so near my heart.’ He then proceeds as follows :

‘ When the heart is young, the body strong, the brain clear and quick, the life as yet scarcely affected by carking cares, the whole being full of hopes, ambitions, and aspirations—to experience at such a time of life the privilege of meeting on terms of kindly friendship, and coming into close personal contact with, any of the men notable in the public life of the day is an inestimable boon. And the more noble the nature of the notable men, the greater is the boon.

“ To have known,” says Dean Stanley, “ and to have been guided by, the example and the influence of characters or intellects that stand the first in worth as in command, is indeed one of the most precious of human opportunities. We know instinctively the characteristics of such pre-eminence. Wherever we recognize, singly or combined, largeness of mind, or strength of character, or firmness of will, or fire of genius, or devoted loyalty, there is a born leader.”

‘ And again, “ The heroes of mankind are the mountains, the highlands of the moral world.”

‘ There could be little difficulty on the part of anyone privileged to know the late Sir Wilfrid Lawson personally and in private life, in recognizing in him, and that speedily, several of the aforesaid “ characteristics of pre-eminence ” ; or in hailing him as “ a born leader ” in the career he carved out for himself ; or in regarding him as one of “ the heroes ” of political life in this country and of the “ moral world ” during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, one might say during the last forty years. For in him were unmistakably to be noted “ largeness of mind,” “ strength of character,” “ firmness of will,” the “ fire ” of an unquenchable enthusiasm amounting to genius, and infecting his followers to dauntless deeds almost comparable with his own, and “ devoted loyalty ” alike to his country, his causes, his family, and his friends.

‘A great book is an enduring stimulus; a great speech or lecture may be most inspiring; a sermon by a great preacher may stir many a heart and affect for good many a life; great deeds may by their example beget other great deeds—but assuredly the most helpful stimulus of all is converse with, and the constant example set before one by, a great, an eminent, a noble, a good man. And “eminent,” “good,” and “noble,” in the very highest senses of these words, without a shadow of a doubt was the late Sir Wilfrid Lawson.

‘Towards the end of 1876 I was recommended to Sir Wilfrid as a possibly suitable Tutor to his two younger boys, Arthur and Mordaunt. Such a recommendation filled me with high hopes, for to be brought ever so distantly into contact with political life had ever been my greatest ambition, and Sir Wilfrid Lawson’s name was widely known in political life.

‘A brief interchange of letters—two at most on each side, for Sir Wilfrid was a man of quick decisions—a single, and by no means prolonged, interview with Sir Wilfrid and Lady Lawson at their then town house, 1 Grosvenor Crescent, speedily followed, and I found myself one January morning in 1877 duly accepted as tutor to Arthur and Mordaunt Lawson, then two bright, happy, chubby little boys of about nine and ten years old.

‘Little did I think as I walked away from Grosvenor Crescent and up to Hyde Park Corner, that the interview, which had ended so satisfactorily for me, was to be the beginning of a friendship which was destined to last thirty years. Little did I think that Sir Wilfrid and Lady Lawson would prove to be most kind, sympathizing, helpful, and generous friends from that day onwards. Little did I imagine that he, of whom I am bound to say I stood in considerable awe during that first interview, would prove to be not only a kind and generous friend, not only a man full of fun and innocent jollity of heart, but one of the humblest,

the best, the purest, and noblest of men whom it was to be my happy privilege to know in this world. Little did I imagine that a correspondence, completed as I supposed that day by the ratification of my engagement as tutor, was destined to continue off and on till within three weeks of my new employer's death thirty years later.

'Yet so it was. And I often wonder how many of the men eminent in public life, how many employers, or men of fame far beyond the limits of their own land, would thus kindly and generously remember during thirty years the private tutor of their younger sons!

'Yet, to one who learned, as I did, during those long years, to know, to honour, and to love Sir Wilfrid Lawson, the recital of these facts and of some others like them does not seem so surprising now, as the very conception of them would have seemed then.

'For Sir Wilfrid's was a unique personality. The milk of human kindness must have been the chief constituent in the building-up of his whole being. In a life of well nigh sixty years, at Eton, at Oxford, in the world, as a clergyman for over thirty years, partly as a curate in a town, partly as a country incumbent, as a member of various public bodies, committees, conferences, councils, and what not, it has been one's lot to come across many and diverse characters, to know many good men, to meet with many beautiful Christian characters in every rank of life. Again, it has been my own good fortune to be blessed by God with many good and generous friends, and, next to a good wife or husband, there is no greater blessing than a good friend. But I can most honestly say that of all the men I have been privileged to meet and know during my almost threescore years, there have been *very few* so good, so truly noble, so consistently Christian—according to the highest ideal, in my mind, of Christianity—that is, who so completely carried out in their life and character and conduct the teaching of St. Paul in the thirteenth chapter of the First of Corinthians—as



Sir Wilfrid Lawson. He was, without doubt, one of the best and noblest men, the humblest and purest and most truly Christian characters, I have ever been privileged to know.

‘But when I say what I feel about Sir Wilfrid Lawson, I can readily imagine some, who had not the privilege of knowing him as I did, charging me with exaggeration. To such cavillers, if any, I would only reply that the following combination of characteristics amply warrants me in making my statement. And all who knew Sir Wilfrid at all well will readily accord him the possession of every single one of these.

‘Let me say then that Sir Wilfrid Lawson’s personality was unique and remarkable for beauty of character ; strength and tenacity of purpose ; calm, quiet courage ; absolute fearlessness of man ; reverential fear of God ; for perfect loyalty to family and friends ; keen sense of honour ; patient endurance under calumny ; for absolute unselfishness of disposition ; for broad and abounding sympathy ; largeness and generosity of heart ; for inability to speak evil of anyone, even of those who spoke most evilly of him ; for supreme toleration of the opinions of others, coupled with courageous inflexibility in holding to his own ; for setting constantly the best possible example to all who came in contact with him ; for unfailing good-humour, for nobility of mind, goodness of life, the utmost purity of soul, and the most large-hearted Christian charity towards all. And to the foregoing characteristics—of each one of which I could easily give detailed proof did space and time permit—I might add many others no less pronounced, no less admirable.

‘Thus I might write of his great humility, the utter absence in him of all pride of wealth or position or intellect, his trustful confidence in those who served him, his never-failing, cheery optimism, his unaffected simplicity, his appreciation of his fellow men, not for what they *possessed*, but for what he thought they really *were* ; and last, but not least, his absolute disregard of earthly honours and titles.

This last trait was notably shown during the very last year of his life by his refusal of the proffered Privy Councillorship. That was the one honour which I have always thought he most deserved, and the one which it has seemed to me he might most easily have accepted without any loss of principle. For while it carries with it no pay or reward, it is the one honour a truly independent-minded man might care to receive, the one honour in the Sovereign's gift (save and except the quite recently established Order of Merit) which is bestowed only upon the truly worthy, the noble in life and character. And who of all our public men during the last half-century was more "independent-minded," more "truly worthy or noble" than Sir Wilfrid Lawson?

'The fact is that Sir Wilfrid Lawson was the most ideally true and perfect English gentleman that I have ever met. In kindly, gentle consideration for the feelings of others, few could equal, none could surpass him. The whole world, of course, knew that he had a keen sense of humour, a most ready wit, and Lord Beaconsfield immortalized this under the apt term "gay wisdom." But the whole world did not know that Sir Wilfrid Lawson was not like many of the eminent of the earth. He did not keep his talents and good qualities mainly for public display, public appreciation. In private life, and in his home-circle, and among his friends, he literally brimmed over with humour, and with the milk of human kindness, far more so even than in his public life.

'When Sir Wilfrid and Lady Lawson were at Brayton, I lived with them in their home, and surely never was a tutor more kindly treated, or made to feel more as almost one of the family than I was by them, and, indeed by all their family and friends. Of course, I had my duties to perform, but, when they were over, nothing could exceed the kindness of the treatment I received. I had next to no experience of

shooting before 1877, yet Sir Wilfrid allowed me now and then to go out shooting rabbits with the head gamekeeper ; and, what is more, he lent me one of his own guns for the purpose. Those were happy days at Brayton. The keeper became a warm friend of mine, and how he almost worshipped Sir Wilfrid ! I think there was no one in the world like his master in the keeper's eyes. And it was much the same with all the head servants in the house and on the estate. There was " no one like Sir Wilfrid " to them, each and all. Time would fail me to tell of the trips and treats and outings and picnics that we enjoyed—to Bassenthwaite, to Keswick, and the Falls of Lodore, on Sir Wilfrid's birthday, September 3, and the visits and tea-parties at Isel Hall, and Netherby, and Arkleby Hall, where dwelt Sir Wilfrid's sister, Miss Elizabeth Lawson, whose beautiful devotion to her gifted brother is ever a sweet memory.

' Sir Wilfrid always entered into all these pleasures with the zest, and almost the abandonment and fun, of youth. He delighted to make others happy and to see them so. And Lady Lawson was no less anxious than Sir Wilfrid for the enjoyment of all. Never have I had the happiness to be a witness of a happier home-circle. Never was husband more devoted to wife, or wife to husband ; never parents more fond of their children, nor children more proud of, and devoted to, their parents ; never a household more kindly and considerately treated—the master winning every heart around him by his consideration for others, and by his never-failing power of seeing the best side of every human being, the least faulty and most humorous side of every action or word.

' It was an ideal household, an ideal home. Happy those who were privileged, as I was, to be, even for a time, inmates of it ! Such memories never die. Nor was there one of Sir Wilfrid's children to whom one's heart did not go out for some endearing trait. Worthy children they

all were of worthy parents. Nearly all of them are married now, and one, alas, dear young Mordaunt, one of my own two pupils, has passed away. But I love to think of them all as they were in those far-off days. There was Ellen, now Mrs. Holland-Hibbert, to whom I used occasionally to give lessons in Latin—an apt pupil, and a true daughter of her father, always kindly, and always bright and ready to see the humorous side of things; there were Mabel and Lucy, now Mrs. Thruston and Mrs. Curwen, with whom I used to play in the long corridors; there was Josephine, now Mrs. Chance, then the “baby” whom I used to carry down those same corridors sometimes for “a ride” on my shoulders. And above all were my own two young pupils, both of whom became endeared to me by many an hereditary as well as many an original trait. And, lastly, there was Wilfrid. Of him, the eldest son and heir, I saw but little, for he was at Harrow, and his holidays usually coincided with my own. But he, too, was always ready to take part with his little brothers and myself in any rustic cricket-match which we might have on hand when he came home.<sup>1</sup>

‘If I were asked what were the most prevailing characteristics of the Brayton household, I should reply at once that they were also the most beautiful—namely, the characteristics of Love and Trust. An atmosphere of trust and confidence and love pervaded the house and the home. To be trusted is, as a rule, to become trustworthy. To be cared for is to learn to care for those who show care for you. At Brayton all who served felt that they were trusted, and this begat loyal service in return. All felt also that they were cared for, and this begat a loyal reciprocity of interest in all.

<sup>1</sup> ‘Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition;  
Young Lamplugh’s team would drive you to perdition.  
However, give the names of those you think would fight,  
And I’ll consider if a challenge would be right.’

(Sir W. L. about a projected cricket-match at Brayton, July 1878.)



‘ Sir Wilfrid and Lady Lawson were an ideal and a noble pair—“ noble,” not as the world usually employs that term : no title could possibly have made them more noble than they were, for they were “ noble ” in the truest senses of that word—noble in life and noble in aim, noble in character and noble in soul, yes, and inspiring nobleness of life and aim in others, and the avoidance of all that is unworthy and base, ignoble and mean. Let no one, however, imagine, that because Sir Wilfrid Lawson was so humble and so sympathetic, so genial and so kind, he was therefore a man with whom anyone could easily take a liberty, or of whom anyone could easily take advantage. Far from that. In spite of his extraordinary humility and geniality, there was, nevertheless, about him a look, not exactly of actual sternness, yet a look which gave you the feeling that if you deserved it, and if he chose, he could be as stern as anyone.

‘ But I think that his best protection was, after all, his own beautiful disposition. He was incapable of saying an unkind word privately or publicly about those who had said unkind words, and cruel and false words too, about him ; he was ever ready to turn aside by some humorous or racy observation any harsh words about himself, and he seemed incapable of nourishing animosity against any living soul ; and so full of trust and confidence in his fellow-men as a whole, that I think those who served him felt that it would be the height of “ bad form ” to do anything but try to serve with fidelity and zeal an employer who seemed so trustful. He was too noble-minded a man to feel unworthy suspicions of anyone, and consequently his very nobility of character made it next to impossible for any who served him to do anything worthy of his suspicions. And thus he exemplified in his character Sir Henry Wotton’s “ Happy Man ” :

Whose armour is his honest thought,  
And simple truth his utmost skill.

‘I have ventured to speak of Sir Wilfrid as the best of husbands, and of Lady Lawson as the best of wives. Let me try to describe him briefly as a father. He was full of fun and frolic, and yet firm, and never losing sight of his children’s best and truest and highest interests; never failing to put before them the noblest ideals. He would never fail to support me in inculcating upon his boys the need of greater attention to their work, and would do so as readily as, when work was over, he would play at Lions and Bears with them in the great front hall. To all who worked in any way for him he was eminently kind and sympathetic, just and fair, with a leaning in all cases towards mercy and generosity. Again, while he literally brimmed over with stories—stories full of fun, which sent his hearers into fits of laughter, stories so numerous that one could not retain them in the memory, and each one seemed more amusing than its predecessor—yet no questionable jest ever passed his lips, nor during all the many months I lived at Brayton and the many years I knew him did I ever hear him utter an angry word.

‘His fires of indignation burned strongly against all oppression and wrong and robbery, against all injustice, against excessive armaments, against war itself and all that might lead to it. He often expressed warm indignation, too, against those who, while sympathizing with natives in far-off lands, and helping to save them from the ravages of the liquor-traffic, had no or but little sympathy for the victims of the drink-traffic in their own land. Many a time did he quote to me, both orally and in his letters also, these favourite lines of his :

Those lofty souls have telescopic eyes,  
Which see the distant speck of human pain,  
While at their feet a world of agonies,  
Unseen, unheard, unheeded, writhes in vain.

‘He could not understand the attitude of such politicians or statesmen.

‘Again, he was a regular attendant at his Parish Church at Aspatria in the morning with his children. He acted, as every master of a household should act, as the priest in his own house, by reading Family Prayers. Whenever sorrow or trouble fell on his own family or on those he knew—indeed at all times and in all ways—he showed his reverential fear of God. But he ever seemed absolutely without fear of man. He cared nothing for results so long as he remained true to his own principles. He might perhaps be in a minority of two or three or even of one. What did that concern him? In one of his letters to me he quotes with emphatic approval Lowell’s lines :

They are slaves who dare not be  
In the right with two or three.

I think that from all my intercourse with him I can truthfully say that his highest, noblest, and loftiest characteristic was his marvellous moral courage, his intense moral earnestness of purpose.

‘Of course his platform utterances showed this, but it was far more evident in his private life and in his ordinary conversation. When with him, you felt yourself in the presence of one who was *always*—not in public merely, not on the platform, or even in the House of Commons merely—but *always* animated by high aims, noble ideals, lofty human purposes. And he infected those around him more or less with his own high aims. Even those who opposed him were compelled to think, and to hammer out the best reasons they could for their opposition. His letters again and again throughout thirty years breathe the same spirit, the essence of the teaching of this good and noble man : “Do your duty according to your lights,” “Do your best,” “Do what you can,” “Be utterly regardless of what men may think or say about you.”

‘I trust I may be pardoned, especially in view of the subsequent results, if, in this connexion I here venture to quote some verses which Sir Wilfrid once kindly wrote for my particular encouragement and benefit.

‘The circumstances were these : The Parish Councils Act had just been passed, and I had been invited to become a candidate for election on the Urban District Council which was to take the place of the old Local Board at Ottery St. Mary. Sir Wilfrid, in response to my request for advice, had advised me to stand. I had issued a somewhat lengthy address, but I felt very nervous about the contest, and the more so because on principle I was opposed to all personal canvassing (and, in fact, I never have canvassed one single voter from that day to this). I therefore wrote to Sir Wilfrid, telling him of my hopes and fears and asking him to wish me “good luck” on the election-day, December 18, 1894. In reply to my letter, Sir Wilfrid most kindly sent me the following verses, and allowed me to print them for private circulation amongst my personal friends in the Urban District. These were the lines :

May the neighbours select you,  
The voters elect you,  
And long may it be before they eject you.  
Let your objects be high,  
Go straight as a die,  
And though troubles may try, there shall nothing deject  
you.

For the poor and the needy,  
The sick and the seedy,  
You will fight a good fight, I know that you will.  
It is men such as you,  
Who are honest and true,  
Who will make a success of this new Parish Bill.



I don't know how they'll treat you,  
Like enough they will beat you,  
For voters don't always endorse what is good,  
But in that case don't mind,  
To whate'er they're inclined,  
You yourself will have "done what you could."

'The immediate results were as follows: I received the lines on December 11, 1894; on the 18th I had the honour of being returned at the head of the poll; and neither my 'neighbours' nor 'the voters' have yet 'rejected' me.

'Those verses really embody the whole spirit of his own life both in public and in private. No man ever lived for "higher objects"; no man ever "went straight as a die," more than Sir Wilfrid did; no man ever allowed himself to become less "dejected" by "troubles," though often "tried" by them, than he. And certainly no man ever "did what he could" more courageously, more pertinaciously, and yet with more unfailing good-humour, than Sir Wilfrid Lawson, and oftentimes against overwhelming odds.

'And now, as I close this paper, sitting in my quiet study, surrounded by my beloved books, and writing at the beautiful oak table, the last memorial of his generous kindness (for it was bought with part of a legacy which he left me)—now as I sit here with his face and those of other dear and valued friends looking down upon me from the walls; now as I draw hope and strength for future conflicts from the memory of the many blessings of the past—among those many blessings for which I most thank God is that of having bestowed upon me many dear and valued, kind, and generous friends, and among the chief of those many blessings is the privilege and honour that I have enjoyed for thirty years—just half my life—of constant correspondence with, and the kindly friendship of, that best and noblest of men, the late Sir Wilfrid Lawson.'

So far, we have seen Lawson in the inner circle of his home ; but, when a man has owned fifteen thousand acres of diversified property, and has drawn a considerable portion of his wealth from land, it is by no means immaterial to know the principles on which he administered his estate, and the use which he made of his territorial influence. In the present instance, this information has been kindly supplied to me by his friend and neighbour, Mr. R. A. Allison, of Scaleby Hall, and sometime M.P. for North Cumberland. Mr. Allison writes as follows :

‘ Sir Wilfrid Lawson was an admirable landlord, and, having hunted and shot over the estate from early years, was familiar and at home with all his tenants.<sup>1</sup> He farmed on a considerable scale himself, and possessed a valuable herd of shorthorns, formed by his father, and regularly recruited from the best strains. It was on his advice that Mr. George Moore, when he settled at Whitehall, near Brayton, engaged in the formation of a herd. Sir Wilfrid, who took the chair at Mr. Moore’s final sale, thus recounted the incident. “ When Mr. Moore is in the country, he must have some amusements, as well as attending to good works. In an evil hour a friend came to him and said, ‘ Mr. Moore, take to farming.’ Mr. Moore took his advice, and rapidly began to dissipate his well-earned fortune. The farming didn’t pay, and his friend came to him again, and said, ‘ Mr. Moore, take to shorthorns.’ Mr. Moore took his advice, and I know from my intimate acquaintance with him that the shorthorns have been a source of the deepest anxiety from that moment to this.” Probably the result was not very different in Sir Wilfrid’s own case.

‘ He was not a rack-renter, and there were few changes of

<sup>1</sup> So also with all his neighbours. One day he was out riding when he saw some men, as he thought, poaching. They made off, and he galloped after them ; but, when he had overtaken them, they explained that they were not poaching. ‘ Then why did you run away ? ’ ‘ Eh, man,’ was the reply, ‘ thoo’s enoof to fley [frighten] the De’il.’

tenants on his estate. There was no more regular attender than he at the meetings of the local Chamber of Agriculture, and he usually took part in the discussions. Though a large landlord and a farmer, there was always absolute unselfishness in the way in which on these occasions, and also as a member of the House of Commons, he approached and dealt with public questions. Thus he never could be induced to support the Agricultural Rates Relief Act of 1896, which he held, though it might temporarily assist the occupier, must ultimately be to the profit and advantage of the landlord. He objected to such doles out of the pockets of the tax-payers at large. He made it the topic of many speeches at the Chamber of Agriculture in Carlisle and elsewhere. Thus, speaking at the former in the autumn of 1896, he said : " They were going to give this money. They said agriculture was depressed. That might be so. It was said that this Bill was not intended to remedy the depression, but only to relieve it, and the relief was to be got by paying half the rates out of the public funds. This system of paying public money drawn from the taxes of the whole community to benefit one class was one of the most flagitious and immoral they could conceive." Again, at a public meeting a little later he returned to the subject : " They saw that working men were now to be called on virtually to give a million to poor 'distressed landlords.' He was very much obliged to them. He had done all he could for working men in his life, and now he thought this was a testimonial. Who were the men who were going to be relieved ? The landlords, and nobody else. It was as clear as daylight. He was a landlord himself, and, though their chairman was good enough to say that he, he was sure, would not raise his rents, yet it was evident that on a change of tenancy or sale of the property the advantage must go into the landlord's pocket. He did not see why he should be thus relieved." In the same spirit he opposed any return to a Protective policy, which

he regarded as landlord-relief out of the pockets of the general consumers. It was this unselfish disinterested way of looking at all public questions that endeared him to his constituents and ensured his popularity with the country.

‘For agricultural distress he held that the best remedy was that those who were engaged in it should receive the most appropriate and scientific education that could be provided. For this purpose he took a deep interest in establishing the Aspatria Agricultural College, and was the Chairman of its Committee until his death.’



## CHAPTER XIV

## EPILOGUE

*(By the Editor)*

My own acquaintance with Wilfrid Lawson began when I entered Parliament, at the General Election of 1880. He was then fifty, and I was twenty-seven ; but it is a pleasant characteristic of the House of Commons that it obliterates all distinctions of age, as well as those of rank and wealth, and puts young and old and middle-aged on a footing of absolute equality. While this is a general law of the place, it is of course illustrated with special force in particular instances. Some of our seniors, with the best will in the world, used rather to patronize us and play the Heavy Father. Lawson's genial spirit, and total freedom from stiffness and pomposity, would have made such an attitude towards younger men impossible ; and I think that we regarded him as a kind of Elder Brother, whom it was particularly easy to approach, and on whose unaffected kindness we could always rely. Though my personal acquaintance with Lawson dated only from my entrance into Parliament, I was of course familiar with his public record ; and it is conceivable that one might have formed in one's mind a rather alarming picture of the zealot who, in season and out of season, had so long been preaching the stern doctrine which was masked under the name of the Permissive Bill. But all such apprehensions were dispelled by Mr. Justin M'Carthy, who, in his 'History of Our Own Times,' (published in 1879) had written as follows :

'The Parliamentary leader of the agitation [against the

Liquor-Traffic] was Sir Wilfrid Lawson, a man of position, of great energy, and of thorough earnestness. Sir Wilfrid Lawson was not, however, merely energetic and earnest. He had a peculiarly effective style of speaking, curiously unlike what might be expected from the advocate of an austere and somewhat fanatical sort of legislation. He was a humorist of a fresh and vigorous order, and he always took care to amuse his listeners, and never allowed his speeches to bore them.'

This account of Lawson I found, on personal contact, to be strictly true; and I might have added that, unlike most leaders of great causes, he was perfectly tolerant of those who did not share his faith.<sup>1</sup> In those distant and unregenerate days I had not even become a convert to the principle of Local Control over the Liquor-Traffic; but this painful fact did not in the least impair the friendliness and good-fellowship with which Lawson honoured me. He knew that I was a convinced and ardent Radical, so that, on nine points out of ten in the Liberal creed, I agreed with him. He seemed content to accept me on that footing, and pleasantly assured me that as regards the Liquor-Laws I should come right one day. Whether I ever quite fulfilled his sanguine expectations, I am not absolutely sure; but I know very well that, in the quarter of a century during which I enjoyed the privilege of his friendship, I learned to regard the nobility and beauty of his character with ever-

<sup>1</sup> This singular benignity of Lawson's temper is well illustrated by the following anecdote, kindly communicated by Mr. Samuel Whitbread, the honoured chief of Whitbread & Co., and for forty-three years M.P. for Bedford: 'One night coming from the House of Commons—it had been raining heavily—Lawson and I were arm-in-arm picking our way across the very wet road to Great George Street, when suddenly an omnibus, coming at a great pace, seemed to be right over us. I don't know how we escaped. There was a great shout, and we found ourselves safe on the pavement. I said to Lawson—"My friend, are you aware how near we were to being crushed by that bus?" "Yes," he replied. "I was just thinking that, if that had happened, there would have been joy in either camp."'

increasing admiration. His personal attractiveness had always been the same, but our political sympathy grew deeper as time went on. In all those great issues of national policy where questions of Right and Wrong are concerned, he seemed to find his way, by a kind of intuition, to the right side, long before the public conscience had been enlightened, and even when, as in the case of the South African War, it had been systematically misled. His memory will always abide with me as that of the most unswervingly conscientious politician whom I have ever known.

This seems, in some ways, a hard saying ; for it has been my happiness to know, and sometimes to be closely associated with, politicians of the highest character and of unquestionable integrity. But most of these men have been, on one side or the other, members of the Government ; and it is obvious that any man who joins a Government must do so with the full knowledge that he is making himself part of a system in which compromise, adjustment, mutual concession, and give-and-take, are the necessary conditions of life and work ; where no one can have everything exactly as he would wish it ; and where each man must be content if, in vital and urgent matters, he is sufficiently at one with his colleagues to make combined action possible. Then again some of the most high-minded men whom I have known in public life have been, before and above all else, loyal members of a Party. To such men it is the easiest and most natural thing in the world to put their individual scruples into their pockets ; to subordinate their special objects, if they have any, to the general purpose ; to stifle all critical impulses whether in themselves or in others ; and to back their leaders' policy however strange or inconsistent it may seem. Their motto is, ' My Party, right or wrong,' and they act up to what they profess.

With the habits of mind thus indicated, Lawson had no sympathy. He would not have sat in judgment on members

of Governments or devotees of Party, but he himself was built on different lines. He, instinctively and by habit, applied a perfectly independent judgment to each question as it arose. His conscience was, in Newman's fine phrase, a King in its imperiousness, a Prophet in its predictions, a Priest in its benedictions or anathemas. If the course pursued even by his political friends deviated by a hair's breadth from the line which he thought right, his opposition was a foregone conclusion. He could never be convinced, or intimidated, or cajoled. In brief, his was exactly that type of character and intellect which is to the political managers a powerful irritant, and to the hacks whom they manipulate a sealed and hopeless mystery.

In my estimate of Lawson's character, I have assigned the first place to his Conscientiousness: the second, I think, belongs to his Benevolence. 'Philanthropy' would perhaps be a better word, but it is too much associated with Societies and Subscription-Lists. Those who love a pseudo-philosophical style might prefer to call the quality Altruism. But, name it how we please, I mean the quality which impels a man to sacrifice ease, comfort, popularity, if need be health and money; to spend and be spent; to face ridicule and calumny; to risk misunderstanding; to imperil valued friendships, and to brave the alternative reproach of foolery and knavery, in order to serve and save his fellow-men. This impulse always seemed to me the dominating influence of Lawson's life; and the parliamentary 'Reminiscences,' which form the staple of this book, abundantly confirm my impressions. He had absolutely nothing to gain by entering public life. The accidents of birth and fortune had placed him far above the sphere in which sordid and vulgar ambitions operate. The honourable prizes of parliamentary service meant nothing to a man who would not, for any inducement, have endured the trammels of office. He held tenaciously to the high faith that the chief reward of life is the consciousness of duty done; and to applause, whether of Parliaments or mobs, parties or persons,



he was as indifferent as he was to calumny and abuse—and one could not express indifference more strongly.

No. Wilfrid Lawson entered public life solely because he believed that a seat in the House of Commons afforded him a special and privileged opportunity of working for his fellow-men, and of employing his peculiar gifts in the promotion of the great causes which were as dear to him as life itself. Those causes, taken in the mass, coincided pretty closely with those for which the Liberal party has always contended.

It has been truly said that Liberalism is not so much a set of opinions as a habit of mind ; and the best answer ever made to the question—‘Why are you a Liberal ?’ was, ‘Because I can’t help it.’ In each succeeding age the Liberal ‘habit of mind’ is brought to bear on the problems, ever fresh yet ever recurring, which concern the public good ; and it issues in those practical efforts to find the right solution which we call the “Causes.” It is indeed a guess, but a pretty safe guess, that young Wilfrid Lawson grew up a Liberal ‘because he couldn’t help it.’ He was, as the phrase is, built that way. Heredity had something to say in the matter, for, as Mr. Lammeter says, ‘Breed is stronger than pasture’ ;<sup>1</sup> but the pastures on which young Lawson browsed were eminently fitted to develop what heredity had begun.

It was stated at the beginning of this book that the elder Sir Wilfrid Lawson entrusted the education of his sons to Private Tutors, and the Rev. J. Oswald Jackson, who taught young Wilfrid, has left this interesting record of the method which he pursued :

‘I felt it important to inform and educate my pupil in all the great questions of the day, and I took advantage of all the public events and discussions then taking place . . . In 1842 we had the Affghan, and Chinese opium, wars, leading to geographical and social and economical and moral, as well as political, research and inspiration. In 1843 were the riots in Wales, when “Rebecca’s daughters took possession of the

<sup>1</sup> *Silas Marner*, chapter xi.

gates of their enemies," by breaking open the turnpike gates. Again in 1843 came up the everlasting Irish Question, when O'Connell was electrifying Ireland by his advocacy of Repeal of the Union, and Tara and Clontarf became the centres of interest. We read the daily papers, and thus early did Wilfrid Lawson begin to see the need of dealing more justly and more generously with that excitable and oppressed people, and probably then imbibed those views and convictions which made him in after years one of the most earnest and popular advocates of Home Rule.

'About this time came into prominence the question of "Church and State," especially in reference to the Scottish Church. It came in the form of controversy on the question of Patronage. Dr. Chalmers and Dr. Candlish were lecturing through the country, and a party from Brayton went to Carlisle to hear a lecture, a full report of which was given in the *Carlisle Journal*, and duly read and discussed by us. But the great climax of the movement was when 474 of the most devoted and popular ministers of the Kirk walked out of the Assembly, and proceeded to form the "Free Church of Scotland." Their "Deed of Demission" was scanned with peculiar interest by the young politician at Brayton, and that interest was all the more fully inspired and informed by his reading every week that most logical and powerful of newspapers, the *Nonconformist*, then edited by Edward Miall. Thus unconsciously to himself were opinions being formed and convictions deepened on a question upon which, as a grown man, he has never given but one earnest and decided opinion.

'Another question now coming to the front was that of Peace. Elihu Burritt<sup>1</sup> was its then living embodiment, and his "Leaflets" were read at Brayton as they came out.

'Another apostle of Peace, Mr. Henry Richard,<sup>2</sup> then in early manhood and vigour, paid a lecturing visit to Brayton.

<sup>1</sup> (1810-1879) American journalist and lecturer.

<sup>2</sup> (1812-1888) M.P. for Merthyr Tydvil.

As the Affghan War had then just terminated, a keener interest was felt, and a living importance attached to Mr. Richard's visit. . . . These were the views with which young Wilfrid was familiar, and his subsequent advocacy of Peace shows that his life has been one effort to make his *beau idéal* on this and other matters the *beau réel*.

'Next came the "Seven Years' War" against the Corn Laws, beginning indeed as far back as 1840, but culminating, in 1846, in the total Repeal of that iniquitous and most unpolitic tax on the necessities of life. The speeches of Lord Granby, Mr. Disraeli, and the Duke of Richmond on the one side, and of Villiers, Cobden, and Bright on the other, were closely scanned and eagerly discussed at Brayton, while the pictured comments of Mr. Punch added a wondrous reality and charm to the whole subject, and burned the question of Free Trade into the very heart and life-creed of the young student.

'Then came the year of Revolution—1848—when every morning told of some fresh upheaval, spreading like wild-fire from country to country, shaking kingdoms and thrones, causing terrific slaughter in France, leading to Chartist riots in England, and bringing home lessons of deep political importance to all observers.'

Thus all the influences which surrounded Wilfrid Lawson at the age when human nature is—

'Wax to receive, and marble to retain'

—tended to encourage and develop that Liberal habit of mind which was part of his essential constitution. But Liberalism is a name which, at one time or another, has been stretched to cover a large variety of opinions and beliefs, and young Lawson did not long leave his friends in doubt about the particular type of Liberalism which was to claim his allegiance. It might have been expected that his close association with Sir James Graham (who, when he was

not a Tory, was a Whig), would have inclined the younger politician to 'the principles of the Revolution of 1688,' and to 'the cause for which Hampden died on the field and Sidney on the scaffold.' But Lawson's ardent and adventurous spirit utterly declined to be 'nourished in the creed outworn' of Whiggery, and the only use which he had for 'Whigs' was to make them rhyme with 'Prigs,' whenever their shortcomings moved his muse to wrath. His parliamentary record proves beyond doubt or contradiction that he was from first to last, and only more markedly as time went on, a Radical.

In February 1881 I was sitting by Lawson's side on the platform of the 'Memorial Hall,' in Farringdon Street, at a meeting called to support the independence of the Transvaal; and Lawson, in the course of his speech, said, suddenly and emphatically, 'I am a Democrat,' whereupon a voice from the hall interjected, 'Then why don't you drop your 'andle?' Lawson was far too sensible a man to think that he would help his cause by an affectation of singularity in a matter of names or titles; but he showed his contempt—in my judgment excessive—for titular honours when he refused the Privy Councillorship; and he spoke the literal truth when he said to his constituents in 1878—'A seat in the House of Commons I value as the only honour I have that is worth possessing.'

Lawson declared himself a Democrat, but faith in Democracy means a good deal more than a contempt for honours. It means, though in a very different sense from that in which St. Augustine used the phrase, the conviction that *securus judicat orbis terrarum*. It means the belief, which Gladstone formulated, that 'it is in the masses of the People that the deepest fountains of true life reside.' A politician who believed, absolutely and without qualification, in democracy would wish to see Lincoln's great ideal of 'Government of the people, by the people, and for the people' applied without stint or reserve to every department of the national life. In the broadest and simplest terms, he would



trust the people to act wisely and rightly, and would leave them free to work out their own salvation.

Tried by this test, was Lawson a Democrat ? In nine out of ten of those concerns which affect the public good, and which form the matter of politics, his democratic faith stood firm and immovable. In the tenth, and that was the main work of his life, it failed. He would not trust the people with the control of the Liquor-Traffic. He was willing enough that they should abolish it or diminish it ; he was not willing that they should establish or increase it. Here we seem to touch the one inconsistency of Lawson's creed ; and, like many another inconsistency in men who have played great parts in history, it displays the intensity of a master-passion, trampling on the obstacles raised by logic and theory. That master-passion was, beyond question, his hatred of an agency which he believed to be fatal to physical and moral health, and of all forces and systems and doctrines which tended to encourage it and give it scope. I do not know who it was that first called Alcohol ' the Devil in Solution,' but the phrase exactly expressed Lawson's belief, and his belief necessarily governed his action.<sup>1</sup> For the origin and development of his views on this subject, I turn again to the testimony of the Private Tutor, who watched so carefully the growth of his character and opinions.

' Wilfrid Lawson's views on the question which he so specially made his own—*Temperance*—were, I think, early formed from his father's example and influence.

' The elder Sir Wilfrid had at first adopted the old Temperance platform—viz. that *spirits* should be forbidden, while

<sup>1</sup> ' Not very long since, Mr. Walter, the much-respected Member for Berkshire, was talking of Temperance. I observe that, when anybody comes fresh to the question and makes a speech, he always uses very strong language—a great deal stronger language than I ever venture to use. Mr. Walter, in his speech, said that he had heard an expression used which he highly approved of, and that was that Alcohol was " the Devil in Solution." '—Sir Wilfrid Lawson at Manchester, October 24, 1877.

wine and beer might be used as beverages. But such half-measures were found inadequate to meet the national sin of intemperance. So Sir Wilfrid invited some thoroughgoing and powerful advocates to visit his neighbourhood. Thomas Whittaker<sup>1</sup> and James Teare<sup>2</sup> (a rough-and-ready but most earnest and powerful advocate of Total Abstinence), came, and had great success under Sir Wilfrid's patronage. Then Dr. Parfitt came, whose scientific lectures attracted great interest, and especially a course of Lectures on Physiology, with diagrams, all intended to promote the habit of abstinence. For fully three months, Physiology became the prominent subject of study at Brayton, and young Wilfrid had the advantage of learning from his tutor about such books as Andrew Combe's 'Physiology of Digestion,' George Combe's 'Constitution of Man,' William Smith's 'Life, Health, and Disease,' and other similar works.

'No course of College lectures could have rendered this subject more interesting and more intelligible than Dr. Parfitt's Lectures, with the attendant illustrations, and a parallel course of reading. After this foundation of facts and knowledge, it only remained for the future Advocate of Total Abstinence to open his eyes to the evils of the drinking system in English society, and to extend his readings on the subject as the years went on. Thus, as Alfred de Vigny describes a grand life—it is "Une pensée de la jeunesse, exécutée par l'âge mur."'

In this connexion I am impelled to quote some characteristic verses written by Lawson in 1870 to Esme Howard, the youngest son of his neighbour Mr. Henry Howard of Greystock. They were suggested by a report that Esme, then eight years old, was in the habit of asking, when offered wine or beer, 'What would Sir Wilfrid say?'

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Whittaker (1813–1899) was the first man in this country to devote his life to the advocacy of Total Abstinence.

<sup>2</sup> James Teare (1804–1868) took the pledge in 1832.

With wine they'll often fill your glass  
At ball or dinner gay,  
But ere you drink, oh ! pause and think—  
'What would Sir Wilfrid say?'

The goblet bright, it shines in light,  
Clear gleams the rich Tokay,  
But ere the glass your lips can pass,  
Just think what he would say.

He'd say, 'Why, here's a little boy,  
Who's only eight, I think,  
And surely he is far too young—  
Too young to take to drink.'

But let him live, like one of old,  
On water from the brook—  
'Twas that, and that alone, we're told,  
That Samson ever took.

Thus may he health and strength attain  
To fight life's battle through,  
And, come what will of good or ill,  
Be honest, brave, and true.

Let cynics sneer and idiots jeer,  
And scorn the simple plan—  
What then ? They've scoffed at all that's good  
Since first the world began.

So it may chance, some future day,  
When youth's fair spring has fled,  
The words may still around you play,  
'That's what Sir Wilfrid said.'

In the general field of Politics, and outside the special department of the Liquor-Laws, Lawson followed the advanced line of the Liberal party. He was no lover of sects and schisms, plots in the Lobby or combinations in the Tea-Room. His nature was to go straight ahead, turning neither to the

right nor to the left, and always in what foxhunters would call 'the first flight.' Apart from questions connected with Liquor, he was singularly free from crotchets and 'isms'; and, whatever was the policy of the advanced section of the Liberal Party, you might be pretty sure that Lawson would be found supporting it. He had absolutely nothing in common with the Bureaucratic, Imperialist, and warlike spirit which, even before Gladstone's disappearance, began to infect the Liberal Party. His hatred of Militarism was one of his strongest passions. In July 1882, he consented to make a speech on Local Option at Aylesbury, and I well remember that, in discussing the arrangements for the meeting, he stipulated that he must get back to the House in time for the division on the Vote of Credit for military operations in Egypt. 'I would not miss that division,' he said, 'though it was the last vote I should ever give in the House of Commons.' Of course he voted against the Liberal Government, which was then, in his judgment, violating the first principles of Liberalism. The bombardment of Alexandria moved his liveliest indignation, and on the 12th of July he protested against it with an incisive vigour which was very distasteful to his leaders.

'I say deliberately, and in doing so I challenge either Tory or Liberal to contradict me, that no Tory Government could have done what the Liberal Government did yesterday in bombarding these forts. If such a thing had been proposed, what would have happened? We should have had my Right Hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department<sup>1</sup> stumping the country, and denouncing Government by Ultimatum. We should have had the noble Marquis the Secretary of State for India<sup>2</sup> coming down and moving a Resolution, condemning these proceedings being taken behind the back of Parliament. We should have had the President of the Board of Trade<sup>3</sup> summoning the Caucuses. We should

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Harcourt.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Hartington.

<sup>3</sup> Right Hon. J. Chamberlain.



have had the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster <sup>1</sup> declaiming in the Town Hall of Birmingham against the wicked Tory Government; and, as for the Prime Minister, <sup>2</sup> we all know there would not have been a railway train, passing a roadside station, that he would not have pulled up to proclaim non-intervention as the duty of the Government.'

This was in July. In the subsequent autumn Gladstone moved a Vote of Thanks to our soldiers for their conduct in Egypt, and Lawson opposed the motion in a speech full of caustic humour and common-sense. 'If,' he said, 'it comes to a Vote of Thanks, it is not to the English troops that we should have moved it, but to the Egyptians—for running away.'

The following verses belong to the same sad period of tergiversation in high places and Liberal discontent :

The Grand Old Man to the war has gone,  
In the Jingo ranks you'll find him;  
He went too fast for Brother John,  
But Chamberlain's still behind him.

'Land of Fools,' said the Grand Old Man,  
'Let nothing I do surprise thee;  
And, if any blame be cast on my plan,  
The Grand Old Man defies thee.'

On Egypt's sands the Old Man fell,  
But he would not own his blunder,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Right Hon. J. Bright. Mr. Bright resigned office on July 17.

<sup>2</sup> Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone.

<sup>3</sup> When it was too late, Gladstone gave away the whole case for intervention in Egypt, and threw the blame on the Tory Government. In his address to the electors of Midlothian before the General Election of 1885 he used the following words: 'We have, according to my conviction from the very first (when the question was not within the sphere of party contentions) committed by our intervention in Egypt a grave political error, and the consequence which the Providential order commonly allots to such error is not compensation, but retribution.'

The Midlothian Book,<sup>1</sup> which we knew so well  
He took, and he tore asunder.

And he said, 'No fall shall sully thee,  
Thou record of worth and bravery;  
Thy pages were made for the good and the free,  
And not for this deep-dyed knavery.'

I said just now that Lawson followed the advanced line of the Liberal party. Not seldom he indicated that line as the right policy for the party, long before the leaders had come to recognize its possibility or its expediency. Thus, in November 1881, when the Liberal Government was imprisoning Parnell without trial, and Gladstone was invoking the 'resources of civilization against its enemies,' and Forster was hunting very unsuccessfully for the 'Village Ruffians,' whom he had promised to lay by the heels, Lawson made an emphatic declaration in favour of Home Rule. Addressing his constituents at Carlisle, he spoke as follows :

'I am convinced of one thing—that, as surely as I stand here, a disaffected nation, hating the rule of the nation that governs it, is not a source of strength to that country, but a source of weakness to everyone concerned in the matter. Suppose you had a housemaid who was continually breaking the crockery, who went into hysterics once a week, and had to be put into a strait waistcoat, and three or four policemen brought in to keep her in order, would you keep her? No; you would say, "*Wayward sister, go in peace.*" (Cheers and laughter.) Or my friend Mr. Howard here. He keeps a pack of foxhounds. Suppose he had one abominable hound, always worrying the other hounds, howling and yelling all night, and flying at the huntsman's throat when he went into the kennel, do you think he would keep that hound? Would he say, "I must not have my pack

<sup>1</sup> 'Political Speeches in Scotland, November and December, 1879, by the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P.'

‘disintegrated’ ? ” No, he would write to the Master of a pack of harriers, and say, “ I beg to make you a present of the most valuable hound in my pack.” (Loud laughter).’

There were probably not three other Members of Parliament who at that time would have ventured on that suggestion of Irish policy ; and, apart from the singular courage which the speech disclosed, it is worth recalling as a typical instance of the speaker’s favourite method. No one ever excelled him in the art of enforcing a serious argument by a humorous illustration ; and the allusion to the probable conduct of the disgusted Master of Foxhounds is about as characteristic a touch as any which can be found in all the great array of his collected speeches.

In this particular matter of Home Rule, Lawson was miles ahead of his party. He thought and spoke and acted for himself, and was indeed a pioneer of the new policy. When the strife raged round more ordinary topics, such as the Extension of the Suffrage, the Ballot, Disestablishment, and resistance to the claims of the House of Lords, he marched in the foremost rank. Perhaps, indeed, he outstripped it when, commending the Burials Act of 1880, he declared that the Act, good in itself, was only an instalment of a larger reform, and that the churches as well as the churchyards ought to be thrown open for Nonconformist rites.

When a man’s work in life has been done mainly through public speech, it is interesting to know something about his way of speaking. In this respect, as in so many others, Lawson was quite unlike what people who did not know him expected him to be. There was nothing fanatical, fiery, or excited about his style of oratory. He spoke with perfect ease and fluency, but quietly, deliberately, and with complete self-control. He was the master, not the servant, of his oratorical power. As a rule, his speeches were carefully prepared, and he made free use of notes ; but he could speak, when necessary,

without premeditation ; he was always on the happiest terms with his audience ; was quick in reply, clever in dealing with an interruption, and successful in turning the laugh against the interrupter.

James Russell Lowell, referring to his own writings at the time of the American Civil War, remarked that he had been 'able to keep his head fairly clear of passion, when his heart was at boiling-point.' Lawson might have said exactly the same about his political speaking. His heart was always 'at boiling-point' when he was pleading for the Causes in which he believed ; but he contrived to keep his head 'clear of passion,' and was perfectly prepared to argue the point against adversaries who merely howled and raved.

The aim of Logic, according to the Ancients, is to arrive at truth ; the aim of Rhetoric to persuade men. In Lawson's speaking both faculties were combined ; and, while he was always ready to give a reason for the faith that was in him, he knew as well as anyone the value of resonant declamation, and the power of finely-chosen words to enforce a moral appeal. It is only natural that his best-remembered speeches should be those connected with the Liquor-Traffic ; for that was the subject which lay nearest his heart, and which inspired his most memorable performances in the way of public speaking. Those speeches will not easily perish, for the various organizations which seek to reform the Liquor-Laws, and the host of speakers and writers and compilers of extracts who labour for the same end, will long turn to Lawson for their most effective quotations. Even Canning himself, in his great comparison of a nation at peace to a Man of War riding at anchor,<sup>1</sup> was not happier than Lawson in this description of the tide which was to carry the Permissive Bill :

'I have alluded to that little sign of progress.<sup>2</sup> I shall be told it is all very well, but you know that all the great states-

<sup>1</sup> At Plymouth in 1823. (Vol. VI. of Canning's 'Speeches.')

<sup>2</sup> The passing of the Irish Sunday Closing Bill.



men are still dead against your Bill.<sup>1</sup> Of course they are. Why, when the great statesmen have come round, the Bill is as good as carried. Have you seen a flotilla of ships of all sizes riding at anchor in the tideway, and have you seen the tide turn and suddenly begin to flow? Which came round first? The little cock-boats; then the ships a little bigger; then the three-deckers; and then the grand man-of-war wheels round along with the others. When the tide is strong enough, the statesmen—the tide-waiters—will come round with it. But don't you hurry these statesmen. They are far cleverer than we are. They won't do the right thing till the right time, and the right time is when you tell them they must do it. Statesmen, indeed! Who pins his faith on statesmen? Not I. I have lived long enough to get over all that.'<sup>2</sup>

Lawson's speeches on general politics are perhaps less widely remembered, and it is right to give a specimen of his style when dealing with the moral aspects of a political question. When speaking at Whitehaven in January 1879, he thus denounced the Affghan War, and the episcopal votes by which in the House of Lords it had in the previous December been supported:

'I don't approve of that sort of work; I don't think that the way to convert one nation is to cut the throats of another. There seems to me about that vote of the eight bishops, the other day, in favour of this war, there was something very extraordinary. I think in my time there has been nothing more grotesquely horrible, or more horribly grotesque, than to see those ecclesiastics, who seem to me to be a cross between savages and saints, who one day appear in the House of God as the ministers of peace, and on the next day in the House of Lords go and vote for an unjust and unnecessary war. I know not how this matter may stand in the great Hereafter when

<sup>1</sup> The Permissive Bill.

At Manchester, October, 1876.

Infinite Justice shall strike the balance of all human accounts, but I think there are some of us who would then rather stand in the position of the untutored Affghan killed in the defence of his life, his home, his liberty, and his country, than in that of the erudite and enlightened ecclesiastic, who, from his place of pomp and power, has "cried havoc and let slip the dogs of war" on a mission of rapine, revenge, and cruelty.'

This is a fair specimen of Lawson's graver manner; but he was certainly not less effective when he enlivened a serious discourse with a touch of sarcastic humour. Speaking at Carlisle in January 1883, he thus satirized our recent performances in Egypt, and the public and social celebrations with which the return of Lord Wolseley and his troops had been welcomed :

'It was for this, to crush out the freedom of the Egyptians, that we spent five millions of the hard-earned money of the people of this country; it was for this, that some of the best blood of England was poured out on desert sands; for this that the whole press wrote pæans of delight; for this, that the aristocracy and the London mob joined in high carnival the other day; for this, that the Archbishops and Bishops of the Christian Church sent up to Heaven a thanksgiving for the slaughter which we committed; and it was for this, that the very Quakers themselves, in a paroxysm of patriotism, threw up their hats and shouted for Glory and Gunpowder.'<sup>1</sup>

The humour of the foregoing passage, though undeniable, is certainly mixed with a certain acidity. No one knew better than Lawson that, if you can make an objectionable policy look ridiculous, you have done more towards killing it than the most thunderous invective can do; and, when he was thoroughly angry, as he was with our antics in Egypt, his humour gave a keen edge to his rebuke. This was the judgment of Cardinal Manning, a shrewd observer and a man of

<sup>1</sup> Some fuller specimens of Lawson's oratory will be found in Appendix I.

wide experience : ' I never heard any man whose spontaneous fun was so overflowing as Sir Wilfrid Lawson's. He somehow or other cannot open his mouth without joking ; but I may say that I never heard out of his mouth a joke that ought to have wounded any man. With genuine kindness, genuine charity, he makes men laugh at themselves, rather than feel that they are laughed at.' It is quite possible that the Bishops and Quakers satirized in the foregoing passage might have felt that they were laughed at, rather than laughing at themselves ; but, when applied to Lawson's public speaking as a whole, the Cardinal's judgment was absolutely just.

As regards the intercourse of private life, I consider Lawson the most purely humorous man whom I ever encountered. Wild horses should not drag me into a discussion of the difference between Wit and Humour ; but I shall sufficiently convey my meaning when I say that Lawson woke one's laughter, not by polished epigrams or verbal felicities, or anything which could possibly have been prepared beforehand ; but by the spontaneous flow of his mirthful and mirth-making spirit, which saw instantaneously the ludicrous aspect of each incident as it arose, and made the most unexpected turns from grave to gay. His memory was crammed with treasures of fun, which came tumbling out in headlong profusion, but always hitting, as it were, by accident, the point of the moment's joke. No ludicrous scene or situation or phrase or characteristic seemed ever to have escaped his notice ; and, though no human being was so far removed from the feebleness of ' anecdotage,' yet no one told a humorous story with so much pith and point. To hear Lawson talking at his best—and he was almost always at his best—was to enjoy the very perfection of irresistible comicality.

When the gift of humour is so strongly developed in a man as it was in Lawson, it must of necessity appear, not only

in his speech but in his writing. Lawson made no pretensions to literary culture, and bestowed, so far as I know, no special pains on his written style. He wrote, as he spoke, out of the abundance of his heart ; but his mode of expressing himself was singularly racy, pointed, and effective. As a sample of his serious writing, composed with a view to publication, I have given in Appendix II. a dissertation on the genius and work of Cobden ; which no professional essayist or leader-writer could have bettered. Serious, too, in their main purpose and drift, were his private letters, of which he wrote an enormous quantity and to all sorts of people ; but in these his humour refused to be suppressed, and bubbled out in happy phrases and quaint allusions. Almost every letter which he wrote—and hundreds have been placed in my hands—contains some characteristic touch of good sense and good feeling made persuasive by good fun. Let one or two instances suffice :

(*To the Rev. Gerald Reade*)

April 28, 1878.

‘The political deadlock continues. I see Bismarck says he cannot *understand* what the dispute is about. I was glad to read this, as I had begun to think my intellect was failing ; but, if Bismarck cannot understand it, “no fellow can,” except Dizzy.’

(*To a B.A. at Oxford*)

November 16, 1878.

‘Glad you heard so many sermons on Sunday. But you must have been lucky if you heard two which agreed with each other.

‘I suppose G. Curzon<sup>1</sup> will be a Tory. People take their politics and their religion from their Fathers. Why did God give them reasoning powers ? Dizzy did not say much on

<sup>1</sup> Lady Lawson’s nephew ; now Lord Curzon of Kedleston.



Saturday. He is in a mess ; but his party stick to him, and the country is thoroughly demoralized.'

*(To a young man about to be ordained)*

December 11, 1878.

' . . . I shall remember you on your first Sunday. Why not denounce the Affghan War ? Take Ahab and Naboth for your text, and compare those two historical characters with Beaconsfield and the Ameer—and then the Rector will kick you out into the street.

' At all events, I heartily wish you health and happiness and usefulness in your new sphere. You need not be nervous about getting on well. If you are on the path of duty, you will get along *somehow*, there can be no doubt. If a thing has to be done, one can do it. When first I started with the Permissive Bill business, I felt *utterly* and *absolutely* incapable of doing anything in the matter, in the least commensurate with the magnitude of the interests involved. I had a perfect *awe* of the House of Commons, and I never could have ventured on initiating what I did, had I not felt that nobody else *would* do it—that it *had* to be done—so that I *must* do it. . . .

' Gladstone made a *grand* speech last night. The first portion of it had certain defects which I regretted, as it gave an opening to even that atrocious *Times* to hit him pretty heavily in its leader this morning. But the concluding portion of the oration was in a strain of the loftiest and most impressive eloquence. All in vain. The "mechanical majority" will endorse the murder of Affghans, and then return to eat their Christmas dinner and pray in their country churches, "Give Peace in our time, O Lord." What a queer world it is ! I know you will try to do something to make it better.'

*(To his eldest son)*

October 30, 1890.

*(After an unsatisfactory day's hunting)* 'I have come to the conclusion that the two most unaccountable creatures

which have been created are foxes and British electors. You never can tell what either of them will do.'

July 13, 1891.

(*The Kaiser was in London.*) 'Some of our party went to the Wimbledon Review, and said it was good. Some (I one of them) went to see the finish at Lord's. Harrow was manifestly the stronger, so the best men won—which is not always the case in this world. As the battle was over by 4.30, we went off to the Zoo for a bit . . . It would be well, perhaps, if Emperors were kept in cages also. They would do less harm than when they are loose.'

December 27, 1891.

'I'm glad you have some good neighbours. No doubt they are all Tories. Everybody is a Tory. It is only a question of degree. David said that "All men are liars"; but no doubt he knew that some were bigger than others.'

October 12, 1893.

'I gave them a longish anti-murder-by-machinery speech at Carlisle on Saturday, which will be very unpopular with the generality of folks, especially Christians.'

February 7, 1899.

(*About an old labourer at Brayton.*) 'I'm glad you are looking after the poor old fellow. One of the saddest things in this queer world is the lot of the aged Poor. Perhaps Old Age Pensions may be worked out some day. The Party Meeting<sup>1</sup> went off swimmingly. . . . It was rather interesting having to preside over that rather memorable meeting. Of course I had nothing to do but to look as wise as I could, and much wiser than I was.'

<sup>1</sup> The meeting at which Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was elected Leader of the Liberal party.

(To the Rev. S. Proudfoot, originator and editor of 'The Optimist')

November 13, 1903.

' . . . But how about your title of "Optimist." Is there anything to sustain such a name in the present condition of the world? Here you have more people trained and armed for the slaughter of their fellow-men than have ever been seen before.

' Here you have a gigantic monopoly in our own country which lives and moves and has its being in the misery and degradation of the community, ruling that community at its own will, and all the so-called statesmen grovelling before it.

' In America, you see the same development in "Tammany," which is only *Organized Liquordom*.

' Here you have a great political party, which has ruled England for nearly twenty years, exerting itself to diminish the food and increase the drink of the people, and you have the people so besotted as tamely to submit to being robbed and trampled on by these political bandits.

' Here you have a nation which talks about Religious Equality, but which supports a Church described by Bishop Magee as being "based on religious inequality."

' Here you have also idle talk now and then about Civil Liberty, by the very people who maintain a House of hereditary legislators.

' Where, oh where, is the standing of an Optimist?

' It must be somewhere. If we did not believe that, we might as well give up altogether.

' But where at the present is the Rift in the Clouds?

' That is for you to explain in your coming "Optimistic" publication, to which I wish all success, and to which please add me as a subscriber.'

(*To Sir Francis Channing, Bart., M.P.*)

November 3, 1905.

' As to the House of Lords, my notion is that it will "go" whenever the nation makes up its mind that it must go.

' I think that we have never had such an ignominious, pusillanimous, and sordid group in office before. I wonder if the nation really understands the way in which it is being befooled and kicked about by the two gamesters who, the *Times* tells us, "understand one another."

' I begin to *think* that this disreputable state of things cannot last very long into the New Year. Then "The fountains of the great deep will be broken up"; but whether "the New Heaven and the New Earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" will supervene, who knows? It depends on you and me—and a few others.'

(*To the same*)

December 31, 1905.

' We are on the eve of a tremendous Liberal advance, and I honestly think that you and I may feel that we have been doing our best, for years past, to bring it about. Of course, nobody thanks us for having done so. But to see the Sun rising at last "o'er the gloomy hills of darkness," ought to cheer us, irrespective entirely of what others think of us. Our motto should be, "This is the Lord's doing" (not the "House of Lords"). Let us rejoice and be glad in it."

' Now adieu.

May the Poll for you and me  
Be just what it ought to be;  
Then, freshened from the Ballot-boxes,  
Won't we hunt these Tory foxes?'

One of the channels through which Lawson's humour habitually flowed was Versification. He had an ingenious



knack of rhyming, which was peculiarly effective when he was dealing humorously with a political character or event, and he wrote his verses with an extraordinary facility. As often as not his letters were written in metre, and he covered his 'Orders of the Day,' and 'Place-card' as they lay on his knee in the House of Commons, with humorous ditties. A vast number of these have found their way into print, and some of those which were considered most effective were admirably illustrated by Sir F. Carruthers Gould, and published, under the title, 'Cartoons in Rhyme and Line,' in a volume which Lawson characteristically inscribed 'From the Worst of Poets to the Best of Wives.' Perhaps Mr. Fisher Unwin, who published the book, will allow me to make two citations. They both belong to the troubled year 1904—the one relating to Chinese Labour in South Africa, and the other to what Lawson called the 'Hanky-Panky Alliance' between Mr. Balfour and Mr. Chamberlain.<sup>1</sup>

### THE HEATHEN CHINEE

The Heathen Chinee! the Heathen Chinee!  
How Lyttelton loves him we all of us see.  
To protect him from harm, and his money to save,  
We'll send out and catch him, and make him a slave.

Oh! then in a 'Compound' how happy he'll be!  
Who, who is so blest as the Heathen Chinee?  
So Lyttelton tells us again and again—  
'Blest *Heathen Chinee*' his eternal refrain.

With Lyttelton, then, may my blest future be,  
In a 'Compound' to live with a Heathen Chinee;  
And who'll be so happy in there as we three?

<sup>1</sup> See page 269.

## 'HANKY AND PANKY'

Arthur and Joseph are two pretty men,  
 They declare their affection again and again.  
 When Arthur proclaims a thing to be 'so,'  
 'That's just what I think,' comes the answer from Joe.  
 'The name of *Protection* we stoutly abjure,  
 Free Traders at heart we both are to be sure.'  
 'Where thou goest, I go,' exclaims Chamberlain Hanky;  
 'And I go where you go,' replies Arthur Panky;  
 'For one thing is certainly clear beyond all,  
 That united we stand, and divided we fall.'

In the course of my narrative I have introduced two or three specimens of Lawson's verse which most commended themselves to my own judgment, and I here append a few more.

## 'PITY THE SORROWS OF A POOR OLD DUKE'

(OCCASIONED BY A SPEECH OF THE LATE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE)

Pity the sorrows of a poor old Duke  
 Whom Harcourt's Bill <sup>1</sup> has brought to dire distress—  
 He has at his command no more the means  
 The weak to comfort and the poor to bless.  
 Chatsworth shut up  
 Now mourns its exiled lord,  
 Compelled to spend his few remaining years  
 In the cold precincts of a workhouse ward.

Pity the sorrows of these noble men,  
 Whom biting poverty relentless treats;  
 Driven from Castle, Court, and Hall,  
 And forced to seek their living in the streets.  
 And, issuing now from many a lowly den,  
 The sad procession greets the pitying town—  
 See the poor Dukes as pauper sandwich-men,  
 In doleful guise parading up and down.

<sup>1</sup> The Budget Bill of 1894.

Stay, Traveller, if you have a heart to feel,  
(Lest conscience your hard-heartedness rebukes),  
Nor heedless turn from such a sad appeal—  
Oh, give a trifle to these starving Dukes !

‘CANNES’

(AFTER VISITING LORD AND LADY RENDEL AT CHÂTEAU THORENC,  
CANNES)

When Adam first in Eden's bowers  
The human race began,  
Altho' he loved the trees and flowers,  
He felt it was not Cannes.

When round and round he walked with Eve  
A somewhat blasé man,  
He often wished, I do believe,  
That he had been at Cannes.

The Château of Thorenc he knew  
Was sweetly planted there,  
And said to Eve, 'My dear, do you  
Know any place so fair?'

Now Eden is kept up no more  
(The sad result of sin),  
But still the Château of Thorenc  
Invites the stranger in.

And here from many distant lands  
The wanderers gather round,  
Where cordial hearts and friendly hands  
Are in the Château found.

And, sometimes, 'mid the giddy crowd,  
Sir Wilfrid too is there,  
Tho' somewhat 'sat upon' and cowed  
By Lady R. and Clare.

This place would seem to well deserve  
 The fame it has obtained,  
 And Adam would, if here, observe,  
 'Tis Paradise Regained.'

*To the Hon. Mrs. Goodhart (Rose Rendel) on  
 her birthday*

Your's is to-day  
 The natal day—  
 To all a sweet concern.  
 All I can say  
 Is, 'May the day  
 Full often yet return.'  
 In this world's crew  
*Good hearts* are few,  
 As far as I discern,  
 And on that score  
 Is reason more  
 For wishing the return.  
 May suns then shine  
 On thee and thine  
 In what place e'er thou art,  
 For we would see  
 Light, bright and fair,  
 Shine round each true Good Heart.

*(Suggested by Mr. Kipling's denunciation of the 'Flannelled Fool.')*

The Flannelled Fool at the Wicket,  
 In a frivolous pastime may revel;  
 But the khaki-clad brave in the thicket  
 Is playing the game of the Devil.<sup>1</sup>  
 For the battle that's fought out in cricket  
 Is ever a friendly strife,  
 And I think that to take a man's wicket  
 Is better than taking his life.

<sup>1</sup> February 1901.



*(To J. Henniker Heaton, M.P., proposing a Universal Penny Postage, 1905)*

Dear Henniker Heaton,  
You never are beaten,  
But stick to your project like bricks  
And this, your last dream  
Most worthy I deem,  
So my name you may freely affix.

What a world it will be,  
Which some may yet see,  
When a penny such wonders will work  
And think the delight  
To write day and night  
To American, Frenchman, or Turk !

What scope there will be  
For fellows like me  
To send letters and poems and stories,  
Including full reams  
On that best of all themes,  
A tremendous abuse of the Tories !

But, dear Mr. Heaton,  
This world you will sweeten  
By the project you now have in view ;  
It is perfectly clear  
'Twill bring nations near,  
And what better thing can you do ?

*(The Duke of Westminster, being ill, asked Lord Cork to move his motion in the House of Lords for the appointment of a Committee on Intemperance)*

Said the Duke to the Earl  
' A Committee I want  
This horrible drinking to throttle,  
And you, my dear Cork,  
Are the very best man  
I can think of for stopping the bottle.'

So the Earl did the business  
 Without idle talk,  
 And moved the Committee instanter ;  
 And all of them said  
 They were thankful to Cork  
 For thus helping to stop the decanter.

Lawson's delight in versification was no doubt allied with his love of other people's verse. I do not remember that he had any special familiarity with the greatest poetry. Like all good Englishmen, he believed in his Shakespeare and his Milton, and I have known him quote Pope, and Burns, and Byron. One might have supposed that, as a loyal Cumbrian, he would have worshipped that Cumbrian poet who is the purest light in English literature ; but Wordsworth loved nature, while Lawson loved mankind. Indeed, I fancy that the poetry which most appealed to him was that which could be used with persuasive or inspiring effect on the public platform ; for he knew as well as anyone that an aptly quoted verse will often dwell in the memory of the hearers, long after the speech to which it was attached has faded away into deserved oblivion. Thus, for oratorical purposes, he turned incessantly to such poets as Longfellow and Lowell and Whittier ; and he did not disdain the assistance of hymnodists such as Father Faber and Dr. Watts. Even in the Scottish ' Paraphrases ' he found material for his purpose. When he found a passage which really roused his emotions, he declaimed it with unsurpassed effect—

Now stirred the uproar, now the murmur stilled ;  
 And sobs or laughter answered as he willed—<sup>1</sup>

and he sat down amid a tempest of applause, each man turning to his neighbour and asking : ' Did you ever hear anything so fine ? '

It has been said to be a good test of the estimation in which

<sup>1</sup> Bulwer-Lytton.—*St. Stephen's*.

a man is really held, to ask oneself if one could endure to hear him quote the Bible. Tried by this test, Lawson emerges triumphantly. 'From a child he had known the Holy Scriptures,' and he quoted them as the Puritans used to quote them when, as J. R. Green said, England had just become a people of one book. Some of the least familiar incidents and words both of the Old and of the New Testament lay pat to his tongue. The stern voices of the Hebrew Prophets supplied him with denunciations of wrong and robbery, and he habitually tested the language and actions of professedly Christian politicians by the teaching of Him Whom they called Master. No statement of his which I have come across is more characteristic than this fragment from a letter to his son: 'The New Testament is one of the best Liberal Text-Books.'

To a clergyman he wrote at the time of the Affghan War: 'When you preach about St. John, explain that it was only "children" who were to "love one another," and that adults are to spend their lives in preparing machines and armies for blowing to pieces all with whom they have any difference of opinion.'

The following confession of faith was made in 1894, in a letter to Archdeacon Wilberforce, who had been preaching about the Origin of Evil:

'Best thanks for your sermon. . . . One sentence in itself is strikingly good, true and suggestive. You say that "down the ages, thinking men have been propounding their theories to account for it" (evil) "each in its turn involving some new fallacy or confusion." Delightfully expressed and absolutely true. You say that I "think"; but, if I do, I am not one of the "thinking men" who have worked out a theory on this point. You appear to have done so. Let us hope you are right. I have got as far as—in spite of all the surrounding misery and horrors—believing that the great Author is good.

Yet 'mid the maddening maze of things,  
 And tossed with storm and flood,  
 To one firm rock my spirit clings,  
 I know that God is good.

So sings the American Poet. Can we get much further ? '

In a similar vein of feeling Lawson wrote as follows to a younger friend who had just lost his father : ' I always think that one of the hymns which is on the paper you enclosed is most beautiful and touching—

Father, in Thy gracious keeping  
 Leave we now Thy servant sleeping.

We who remain must do what we can in the service of the Great Father, which, so far as we can learn, is what we were sent here to do.'

As regards the special form of Religion to which Lawson attached himself, it has been seen in the earlier narrative that, having been baptized in the Church of England, he was brought up in Nonconformity. As a man he returned to the Church, and the Vicar of the parish in which Brayton is situate describes him as ' a regular attendant at the Parish Church, and a very generous subscriber to all Church Funds.' To a friend just about to be ordained he wrote : ' As to the Church, you may love it and work for it (and I am sure that you will do both), as an *ecclesiastical* institution. But it is not entitled to any exceptional *political* privileges.' When a Bazaar was held at Brayton to raise funds for some purpose connected with the Parish Church, Lawson characteristically took the opportunity of contrasting the graciousness of such voluntary effort with the heartburning and bitterness engendered by the old law of Compulsory Church-Rates. ' Never,' he said, ' lose an opportunity of pointing a moral.'

A clergyman of the Church of England who knew Lawson long and intimately, sends me this estimate of his character.



‘ If “ Love is the fulfilling of the Law ” ; if “ there is none other commandment greater than ” love to God, love to man ; if “ to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ” “ is better than all burnt offerings and sacrifices,” or rather than mere profession and mere outward practice of Christianity ; then I can only say that Sir Wilfrid Lawson was the best “ fulfiller of the Law,” the best exponent of the greatest Christian virtues—“ love and humility, mercy and justice ”—that I have ever known during my life of nearly fifty-nine years.’

This is strong language ; and, to those who did not know the subject of this memoir, it may seem to savour of exaggeration. But, as I meditate upon it, and compare it with my own remembrance, I experience no emotion of dissent.

A life of absolute and calculated sacrifice for the redemption of degraded humanity is, in sober truth, a Christ-like life, and it must surely spring from that ‘ naturally Christian soul ’ in which the Fathers of the Faith believed.<sup>1</sup> It is a rare glory to have spent one’s ‘ length of days ’ in persistent and unconquerable effort for the service of those who are least able to help themselves, and to have accepted no reward except the loving gratitude of hearts inspired and emboldened by a high example.

Not with all our strife and pain  
 Shall you and I attain  
 To behold that end we long and pray to see ;  
 But we know that, though we die,  
 The end cometh bye-and-bye,  
 And we have helped the better days to be.  
 Is not this reward enough—  
 To have helped to smoothe the rough,  
 To have made the toilsome way a little clear ;  
 To have fallen in the van  
 (Though but one forgotten man)  
 Of the army that is bringing the New Year ? <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Anima naturaliter Christiana.* (Tertullian.)

<sup>2</sup> Clementina Black.

## APPENDIX I

## THE DERBY DAY

*(House of Commons, 1875)*

I AM quite sure that the House, as well as myself, must be very much disappointed by the non-appearance in his place of the Prime Minister.<sup>1</sup> I hope that his absence is not caused by indisposition. (Hear, hear.) Had the right hon. gentleman been here, we should doubtless have heard from him some reasons why he called upon the House to take a holiday. In the absence of the right hon. gentleman, however, I must endeavour to give my reasons for thinking the House had better not take a holiday. Now, I remember some time ago, when we on this side were in office, there were in those happy days—(laughter)—three gentlemen—the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies,<sup>2</sup> the hon. member for Whitehaven,<sup>3</sup> and another gentleman, the late Mr. Thomas Collins.<sup>4</sup> (Loud laughter.) I think I am perfectly in order in styling him in that manner, for in a Parliamentary sense, at all events, he is defunct. Those three gentlemen formed a combination in this House, and they were always—or, at least, they were very frequently—moving the adjournment of the House; but one of the three—I will not say which—told me that in his opinion the longer the House sat the more harm it did—(laughter)—and that was the reason he moved its adjournment so often. But I do not suppose that the Prime Minister would have adopted that argument to-day, because it is only a fortnight ago that we were informed that the Government had a number of

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. B. Disraeli.<sup>2</sup> James Lowther.<sup>3</sup> G. C. Bentinck.<sup>4</sup> Sometime M.P. for Boston.

important Bills on the table, and that they intended to carry every one of them if they kept the House sitting until Christmas. I have taken the trouble to see how many Bills have been brought in by the Government, and I find that they are no less than seventy in number. (Laughter.) If that be the case, this is not the time to take a holiday with such a gloomy prospect before us.

I am disposed, however, to think that the real reason why the Prime Minister is in favour of this motion is because, when Lord Palmerston first took upon himself to make a similar motion, he said he looked upon it as part of the unwritten law of Parliament; and we know that the present Prime Minister has an almost fanatical affection for the unwritten law of Parliament. (Laughter.) But I want to disabuse the House of the idea, which may be held by those who are not so well up in sporting matters as they ought to be (laughter), that the Derby Day and the adjournment of the House over it form a part of the British Constitution, just as much as Magna Carta, the Lord Mayor's Show, or the exclusion of strangers from the gallery of the House of Commons. (Laughter.) But I will prove by-and-by that it is not so. I wish, however, before doing so, to clear myself from the charge that I am anxious to interfere with the hon. members. I do not make any objection to hon. members going to Ascot, or to Epsom, or to Newmarket, if they choose to go there in their individual capacity. We know that a great many honoured and respected members of this House regularly take their holiday while the House is sitting, and go to Newmarket or to Ascot, and the House is very much pleased that they should have their amusement, and they are glad to hear that business suffers no impediment through their absence. (Laughter.)

But this practice of adjourning over the Derby Day is not really an old-established custom. The motion for the adjournment of the House over the Derby Day was never made until 1847—less than thirty years ago—and it was then continually opposed, and was carried only by small majorities over and over again. And let me tell the House that the motion was never made by the recognized leader of the Government in this House

until 1860, when Lord Palmerston took upon himself to do it. Since that day it has become the popular thing for the Prime Minister to move this adjournment.

The late Prime Minister <sup>1</sup> moved it in 1872, and the reason he gave for making the motion was—and I wish the House to mark that he did not express his own opinion—that the House believed horse-racing to be a noble, manly, distinguished, and historically national sport. . . . Now I am not going to set myself up against a sporting authority like the late Prime Minister. (Loud laughter.) I am opposing this motion with the object of eliciting useful information as much as for any other purpose, and I want someone who is very much in favour of this motion for the adjournment of the House over the Derby Day to explain to us in what way horse-racing is a noble employment. What is there noble in going down to Epsom and seeing twenty jockeys spurring twenty horses, all for the sake of putting money into their pockets or into those of their employers? It is all a question of money from beginning to end. I do not suppose that jockeys, although they may be very good people in their way, are of the highest types of Christian heroes (laughter), and I don't know that they possess that requisite of British virtue and excellence which the hon. and gallant member for Sussex <sup>2</sup> insists upon—that of being as broad in the chest as they ought to be. (A laugh.) I do hope that some one will explain what there is noble in this sport, more than in any other sport in which the people of this country indulge.

Do not imagine that I object to holidays on proper occasions. There are plenty of opportunities for them. Not long ago we launched one of our large ironclads, and many hon. members went to see that operation. Some of us might not like to go and see preparations made for the destruction of our fellow-creatures, but we are a small minority. No doubt that was a national affair, and there was a religious service performed on the occasion by the head of the National Church, that the ship might be successful in destroying his fellow-Christians in all

<sup>1</sup> Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Walter Barttelot.



parts of the world. (Laughter.) Then, there is the Oxford and Cambridge boat race, which is quite as much a national sport as the Derby, and there is something about a boat-race that you cannot say about horse-races, viz. that there is no suspicion of a 'sell' in the matter. Again, a little later in the session, we shall have the Eton and Harrow match, when we can go to see our boys bowling each other out in the cricket-field, as we hope they will afterwards bowl each other out in this House. (Laughter.)

I want to have an explanation of what there is noble in horse-racing; and, as I can get so little information about it from those who bring forward this motion, I go to the 'Memoirs' of Mr. Greville<sup>1</sup>—a much-abused man now that he is dead, not so much because he said things that were not true, as because he said many things that were true. Mr. Greville moved in the highest circles of the racing world; racing was a passion with him, a delight and an enjoyment; and, after returning from a racing campaign, he spoke of 'the degrading nature of the occasion,' of 'mixing with the lowest of mankind,' and of 'the deteriorating effect both on the feelings and understanding' of all its associations. Referring afterwards to Doncaster, he said he met with 'all that is basest and lowest on earth.' Is Epsom, I ask, so much better than Doncaster or Newmarket? I read of the Turf becoming nothing but a scene of gambling and demoralization. Yet we have the Leader of the House, backed up by the whole Conservative party, who came in to sustain the National Church, adjourning the House for only two hours on Ascension Day and for the whole of the Derby Day. (A laugh.) We have some valuable Bills down on the paper for to-morrow, . . . all of them belonging to hon. gentlemen who do not often get a chance of bringing forward their questions. Would it not be better to try and dispose of some of that business instead of disporting ourselves at Epsom?

Besides, we are not the only branch of the Legislature. In the other, there sit, and probably will sit for a long time, a great number of ecclesiastics. Can anybody imagine the Archbishop of Canterbury<sup>2</sup> proposing and the Archbishop of York<sup>3</sup> seconding

<sup>1</sup> Charles C. F. Greville (1794–1865).

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Tait.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Thomson.

the adjournment of the House of Lords for the Epsom Races? The House will excuse me for making a short quotation from a paper which most right-minded people read, the *Spectator*, which said last year concerning the Derby business, 'It must be urged that it is a sight which the House of Commons does well to revive its faith in humanity by solemnly adjourning to witness once a year.' Then it adds, 'In truth, only one great element of English life is conspicuously wanting—the sacerdotal.' It is pleasant to meet the clergy in the hunting-field; nobody rides better or shoots straighter than they can do. (A laugh.) During the recess we had some statements about a clergyman who bred horses for the turf. The Bishop of Lincoln,<sup>1</sup> in whose diocese he lived, came down upon him with some hard things, and the poor man was obliged to give up his living, but not his race-horses. I should like to know what the hon. member for Mid-Lincoln<sup>2</sup>—a great authority on these matters—would have to say about this; for in this House he legislates for race-horses and out of doors for horse-races. Now, I find it stated in a letter in the *Times*, signed 'Holy Friar,' that Mr. Henry Chaplin is one of the Bishop of Lincoln's lay-consultees—(laughter)—chosen by his lordship in conformity with the decision of a Diocesan Conference.

Now, I need not go to a division; I am disposed to withdraw my opposition to the motion if the Leader of the House will be consistent. Of course, he thinks this is a national holiday, or he would not make this motion. Well, my mind reverts to the last national holiday we had, on a happy occasion, when certainly the whole nation did rejoice. I refer to the Thanks giving Day appointed on the recovery of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales from a dangerous illness. What happened then? You, sir, went through the streets of London in the Speaker's coach, drawn by brewers' horses (laughter), never before put to so noble and laudable a use. That was a national occasion, carried out in a national spirit, and with all the national aids and appliances, and what I have to say, sir, is that, if only the mover will add to his motion a 'rider' that you go

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Wordsworth.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Chaplin.

down to Epsom in your State coach, I will offer no opposition, but on the contrary I promise you that a very large number of the members of this House will accompany you and protect you from the people you will meet with. (Laughter.) Last winter the newspapers were filled with letters from people living near London, describing the nuisance arising from Suburban Races. So bad were those places that the *Saturday Review*—by no means a squeamish paper—characterized them as ‘scenes of filthy ruffianism.’ Let somebody who understands sporting matters get up and deny if he can that Epsom races are equal to forty of these Suburban Races rolled into one. I say, then, that this motion is not a thing worthy of this House. Let us at least be gentlemen first and betting men afterwards. We are many men with many opinions. We differ widely on all questions, social, moral, and political; but in one sentiment I think we are practically unanimous. The honour, the dignity, and the reputation of this House are dear to every one of us, from yourself, sir, in the chair, to the humblest private member; and I therefore ask hon. gentlemen to follow me into the lobby to-day and declare that this House—the first assembly of gentlemen in Europe—shall no longer be degraded by allowing itself to be paraded before the world at a cockney carnival and a suburban saturnalia. (Hear, hear.)

## THE OPIUM-TRAFFIC

(*House of Commons*, 1875)

I congratulate the noble lord the Under Secretary of State for India,<sup>1</sup> on having secured so large an attendance on a hot evening in August to hear his financial statement; and I would console my hon. friend the member for Hackney,<sup>2</sup> who objects to the Indian Budget being delayed until so late a period of the session, by assuring him that there are more members present to-night than there were three or four years ago, on an occasion when the Indian statement really was made at an earlier period of the year. But some people may think

<sup>1</sup> Lord George Hamilton.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Fawcett.

that it is quite unnecessary for us to attend at all, since it was stated in a late debate, by the hon. member for Wick,<sup>1</sup> that it was objectionable 'to import English ideas into the government' of India. But, sir, I hope that the idea of justice is an English idea, and it is because I believe that we are committing a great injustice as regards the collection of one portion of our Indian revenue that I venture to call attention to that particular matter. The hon. member for Kirkcaldy<sup>2</sup> said, in the course of the debate to which I have already referred, that 'his conscience had been much exercised on the subject' of our opium-revenue. I do not wonder at it. The system is connected with one of the grossest international outrages on record. We forced, by our military power, a treaty legalizing the opium-traffic on the reluctant Chinese, for the purpose of raising our Indian revenue. I believe that the true honour and strength of this country depends far more on our upright, just, and fair dealing with other nations than it does on our fleets and armies. What right have we thus to treat the Chinese, solely for our own selfish objects? The same God who made the Indian made the Chinese. We are said to have 200,000,000 fellow-subjects in India; but there are nearly twice that number of our fellow-men in China. Would it not also be wiser by open and straightforward conduct to ensure China as an ally, than to keep alive her hostility by forcing on her a ruinous traffic?

In British Burmah, also, we are introducing the same destructive system; and I have the strongest suspicion that, if everything could be fully laid before us, opium is at the bottom of our unsatisfactory position in relation to Burmah at this moment. I wish that the noble lord, when he replies, could give us some information with regard to these Burmese negotiations. It will not be satisfactory if, in the autumn or winter, when Parliament is not sitting, we suddenly find ourselves involved in a war with the Burmese. I know how Government officials always answer such an enquiry as this. If negotiations are going on, they say 'We cannot speak now in public, it might interfere with the progress of the negotiations.' If war has broken out, they say, 'We cannot speak now, it would interfere

<sup>1</sup> Sir John Pender.

<sup>2</sup> Sir George Campbell.



with the progress of the war.' If papers are asked for when all is over we are told, 'What is the use of the papers now when the whole thing is settled?' But if this opium-business really lies at the root of many of the Eastern complications, there is hardly a more important question which can be brought before the consideration of this House.

It seems to me to be too late to argue about the evils which this traffic inflicts among those where it is carried on. I will, however, give three authorities, which I think ought pretty well to settle that question. Many years ago, Sir B. Brodie, along with twenty-five of the most eminent medical men of the day, signed a declaration, 'That they could not but regard those who promoted the use of opium as an article of luxury as inflicting a most serious injury on the human race.' Here you have the medical testimony. On October 24, 1817, the Court of Directors of the East India Company declared that, 'Were it possible to prevent the use of the drug altogether except for medicine, we would gladly do it in compassion to mankind.' Here you have the confession of the very men who are profiting by the traffic. Lastly, Consul Say, well acquainted with the actual facts as regarded the Chinese, declared years ago that 'it was hamstringing the nation.' And to-day I have had the privilege of conversing with an American official who for nearly thirty years has occupied a responsible post in China, and who knows the country and the people as well, I should imagine, as anyone can do who is not a native of China, and he assures me that all which those of us who oppose the opium-traffic have said in condemnation of it is amply warranted by the facts. He tells me that beyond a doubt it is pauperizing and demoralizing the nation. Only think of this result arising from a treaty which we went to war to compel the Chinese to execute!

I suppose the answer will be 'Oh, the Chinese would get it somehow even if *we* did not force it into the country, so we may as well utilize their vices to pay for Indian expenditure!' Somebody has said that the excuse 'I do not make the wickedness, I only live by it!' is the motto on the rogue's escutcheon all over the world. For my part I am ashamed of such a motto being inscribed upon the flag of England. But there is another

argument which is always brought forward in defence of the system and which runs thus : ' If the Chinese opium-traffic is wrong, then the English spirit-traffic is wrong, but if the English spirit-traffic be wrong, then Sir Wilfrid Lawson is right ; but everybody knows that he is wrong.' Notwithstanding that apparently satisfactory argument, I don't believe really that anything more disgraceful can be found than our own national system in reference to the matter of strong drink. No doubt the House is very much pleased when on a Budget-night the Chancellor of the Exchequer comes down and announces that he has secured 32,000,000*l.* by promoting the consumption of strong drink among our countrymen, and he appears to be utterly regardless of the untold wretchedness and crime of which that sum is the representative. But none the less do I affirm that it is a system of finance, clumsy, contemptible, and cruel. I freely admit that the opium-evils which you inflict on China are not probably equal to the drink-evils which our legislation inflicts on our own country. The consumption of opium whilst it leads to pauperism, decay, and death, does not lead to those scenes of brutal violence and crime for which, through the action of the drink-traffic, we are becoming notorious in this country.

But still, in some respects, our action towards the Chinese is even more revolting than our conduct towards the masses of our own country. Here, at all events, while we debauch them by the drink-traffic, we maintain numbers of clergy to reclaim them, and we erect splendid gaols and asylums to accommodate those who cannot be reclaimed ; and all that is done at our expense. In China we simply reap the golden harvest, and leave all the misery and want to be attended to by the Chinese themselves. Besides, we have thrust this odious system on China at the mouth of the cannon. Here the system is thrust upon us at the mouth of the magistrate. I certainly do protest against our treating China thus. The hon. member for Kirkcaldy extols both systems as being the means of ' serving God and Mammon.' In my humble opinion it is better to serve God and to let Mammon alone.

As I have said, I feel perfectly sure that this system will lead, sooner or later, to serious complications, and probably disasters,

in the East. And what has been done about it? In 1870 I moved a resolution in this House condemning the system. The Government of the day did not meet me with a direct negative, but moved the previous question, the late Prime Minister saying especially that the motion ought not to be carried without 'preliminary enquiry.' Five years have elapsed. What enquiry has been made? Again, this year my hon. friend<sup>1</sup> calls, by a motion, for condemnation of the present system, and this time he is opposed by the present Government even more distinctly and determinedly than I was opposed five years ago. No hope is given of change, or even enquiry. Now, I would respectfully urge upon the Government to make some investigation into this subject. This is a time of calm. There are no politics now. Very few people seem to care about public affairs at home, and still fewer will take any interest in this debate or in the affairs of India and China. But, when troubles come, the public will heavily blame those who, when warned, have declined to make the enquiries which might have led to safety, and who have obstinately maintained a system which is degrading to our national honour, and which will ultimately be injurious to our true interests. †

## THE PERMISSIVE BILL

(*Manchester, 1875*)

As Cardinal Manning was concluding his admirable speech, he spoke of the wish which would be expressed among the women of this country for a Bill such as mine, which should take away the temptations to drunkenness; and, as he spoke, a story came into my mind illustrating the thorough selfishness of this drinking system. A man in the cider counties said to one of his labourers, 'John, if you will give up your allowance of cider, I will give you two shillings a week.' 'No, thank you,' said John. 'Why not?' said the farmer, 'the two shillings is worth a great deal more.' 'Yes,' said the man, 'but my wife would get the two shillings, and I get the cider.' (Laughter.) Well, our law which we attack to-night is as thoroughly selfish as was that man. It is a law for the

<sup>1</sup> Sir Mark Stewart, M.P. for Wigton Burghs.



benefit of a very small portion of the community, and inflicts boundless misery on the majority of our countrymen and countrywomen, and I am glad to see this great meeting showing that you are as warm and as hearty in the cause as ever you were. (Cheers.)

We read sometimes in the papers that there are no politics now, and that politicians are extinct. (A laugh.) Well, perhaps they are, but prohibitionists are alive. (Hear, hear.) There are prohibitionists of all sorts and all kinds. The composition of this platform is a marvel. There are men from every part of the United Kingdom—men of every shade of politics and of creed—and I should like to know what other social or political question of the day there is which could bring on to one platform Mr. Hugh Mason, Cardinal Manning, the Rev. Basil Wilberforce, and the Rev. Charles Garrett. (Cheers and laughter.)

Now, you are all very enthusiastic and in very good spirits, but to-morrow the Leading Articles will come out. (Laughter.) What fun they will make of us! (Renewed laughter.) They will describe the annual 'orgies' of the United Kingdom Alliance, and they will say that we are going on year after year and making no progress; and they will conclude with their usual moral. (Laughter.) Well, all that is quite right; let those laugh who win. (Hear, hear.) In this world nothing succeeds like success; and, until we win the day, we must cheerfully sit down and read with contentment all the abuse and all the ridicule which are poured upon us. I never found fault with it—I rather like it. (Laughter.) But, when we hear of this laughter at our feeble appearance, we must remember the tremendous forces with which we have had to engage. You have had prejudice, and there is nothing stronger than prejudice. You have had custom and fashion, which are almost as strong as prejudice. You have had a strong appetite to contend with. Until lately, you have very often had the clergy condemning our movement; and, as to the press, until within the last few years they devoted themselves heart and soul to ridiculing us. And more than that, you have had arrayed against you the enormous phalanx of 'Vested Interests,' and you know, as well as I do, the real religion of an Englishman is worship of Vested Interests. (Laughter.)



What have we had to counteract these tremendous forces ? We are not like the Anti-Corn Law League. We have not had a number of great manufacturers putting their hands into their pockets, and bringing out their two and three thousand pounds year after year. We have had no great orators going about the country, like Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright. We have had no adventitious forces to aid us. We have had nothing but simply the declaration of the truth from one end of the country to the other. (Cheers.)

You are aware of what we must do to make the statesmen of this country do what we want. I am not a statesman ; and, among all the bad names people have called me, they have never called me that. (Laughter.) I am an 'agitator' (hear, hear), and I don't think very much of the statesmen, but we must have them (cheers) ; and I am not at all talking in this way to run them down, but only to show you the conditions under which they act. They act when they are compelled to act, and I care very little for all their declarations and orations, because I know that, under a certain conjunction of circumstances, act they must. (Cheers.) Now look back at two or three of the greatest statesmen of our time, and see how they have been compelled to act when the right time came. The great Sir Robert Peel—not the present one—(laughter)—made his fame by advocating Protection. Suddenly public opinion changed, and he made far greater fame by repealing the Corn Laws. Mr. Disraeli was known throughout the kingdom as a staunch opponent of democracy. Times changed. So did he—(laughter)—and, when he got into power, he gave us Household Suffrage. One more instance and I have done. That great and brilliant statesman, Mr. Gladstone, was known and honoured throughout the Liberal and political world as the able defender of State Churches. He got into power, and in a few months smash went the Irish Church. (Laughter, and a voice, 'Question.') Somebody says 'Question,' but this is only an illustration. I don't say these men were right either in proposing these measures or carrying them. All I want to explain to you, and to get you clearly to understand, is that these men, though they are called leaders, are no more than the leaders in a stage-coach. (Cheers.) They

go when they are driven—(laughter and cheers)—and they go at no other time. (Laughter.)

Bear with me if I give you one illustration more, still more striking than those which I have already adduced. You have heard of the Merchant Shipping Bill. (Cheers.) I was in the House when that Bill was discussed in its early stages. Never did I hear duller, more dreary, more listless, more apathetic debates. Sir Charles Adderley<sup>1</sup> did his best, but there was no enthusiasm for him, and the time came when the Government thought they might safely withdraw the Bill. So they did. On a sudden Mr. Plimsoll<sup>2</sup> gave a shout. He woke up John Bull, and John Bull said, 'Halloa! what are you about? We can't have our sailors drowned, whatever you men in the House of Commons may think;' and the House of Commons saw that John Bull was in earnest, and then occurred the most amusing transformation-scene that ever I witnessed in any theatre. (Laughter and cheers.) I wish you had been there with me to see how the whole scene changed in eight-and-forty hours—(laughter)—how, instead of apathy, you had Liberal contending with Conservative to make the Bill effective; how you had ship-owners tumbling over one another—(laughter)—to get the Bill speedily passed; and how you had independent members running a race with officials to make the provisions of the Bill stringent and effective; while, as for our incomparable Premier—(a laugh)—he gave it clearly to be understood that, from his youth, the darling wish of his heart had been to pass a Merchant Shipping Bill; that he had done it, and that he retired a proud and happy man. (Renewed laughter and cheers.) Oh, how I did wish at that moment I had the pencil of an artist! I should have drawn a picture of the good ship 'Humbug,' struck by a sudden squall, and all the crew of able-bodied politicians struggling in the water, and only escaping a watery grave by clinging on to Mr. Plimsoll's coat-tail. (Roars of laughter and cheers.)

Now for the moral. [After an interruption Sir Wilfrid continued.] I was explaining the manner in which public opinion was brought to bear upon the House of Commons when the

<sup>1</sup> President of the Board of Trade.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for Derby.

Merchant Shipping Bill was passed. It was very important, no doubt, to save, if possible, the lives of some thousands of our sailors. But does anybody for a moment doubt that the system which we attack to-night destroys ten times, ay, twenty times, the amount of lives in a year which are destroyed through rotten shipping? (Hear, hear.) How, then, are you to get your public opinion to bear upon the House of Commons upon this matter? I tell you that you will succeed so soon as the Liberal whip who manages elections, goes to Lord Hartington and tells him you are in earnest, or when the Tory whip goes to Mr. Disraeli and tells him that the Tory voters are in earnest. You will succeed when the Liberal whip is able to go to Lord Hartington and say, 'My lord, I am sorry to inform you that in several of the boroughs in England, Scotland, and Ireland, people have been reading John Bright's speeches, and they believe what he says—that Public Houses are a source of crime, disorder, and madness. And worse than that, my lord, they have been reading Wilfrid Lawson's speeches—(cheers)—and he goes further than John Bright, for he says people ought to be allowed to remove the causes of crime, disorder, and madness—(cheers)—and, my lord—it is very absurd, they oughtn't to think anything of that kind, they ought to think of nothing but putting you on one side of the table and Mr. Disraeli on the other—but these great fools think that politics are intended to promote the happiness, welfare, and order of the country, and they have determined that they will only vote for those men who will give them power to protect themselves from this great evil.' (Cheers.) The moment that takes place the leaders of the political parties, if they see they cannot win elections without your help, will declare that this is a large and important measure and that the time has come for dealing with it. (Laughter.) Oh, yes, I hope I am not too sanguine; but, when that moment comes, you will see another transformation-scene. You will see them all rushing to support the Permissive Bill, and I really should almost hope that we shall see the sacred names of Bass and Allsopp transferred from the backs of bottles to the back of the Permissive Bill. (Laughter and cheering.)

Sir, we have a good platform to-night. I wish we had a

better. I wish that your own Bishop, the Bishop of Manchester,<sup>1</sup> were here. (Hear, hear.) What did he say about ten days ago? He said that politics were a 'dirty game.' I think they are. (Laughter.) I should not like to speak so strongly as a Bishop—(renewed laughter)—but I should simply say that, as carried on at present between the two parties, pretending there was a great difference between them and unable to show there was any—hardly—politics were not a dirty game, but a very miserable business. (Hear, hear.) Why is not the Bishop here to-night? We play no dirty game at all events. What man is there on this platform, or who has taken part in this agitation, who can get one shilling into his pocket or add to his personal aggrandisement in any way by it? If we entered the agitation with that view we certainly made a great mistake. Sir, I say

Ours is no dark intrigue for place,  
No jostling in a party race;  
Beneath our banner proud to stand,  
Look up the noblest in the land.

I believe you are perfectly unassailable. (Hear hear.) I often wonder how it is that such a little measure as mine, so simple, has made such a tremendous stir. (Hear.) Sometimes it is called 'revolutionary.' Then there is another tack taken, and I am told it is good for nothing, and will never be brought into operation. Then I am told that nobody ought to support it but teetotalers. Then we are told that non-teetotalers ought not to support it because they have no right to promote order and morality in the country. I think they have quite as much right as teetotalers. Now I say let us sweep all that away about who the people are who support us, or what their motives are; let us get rid of that, let us hail all recruits who come to us, and base our policy on the strong and solid ground of freedom, justice, and common sense. (Hear.)

I beg of you if you have any other question of the day more important, make that your main point, and make prohibition of the liquor-traffic subservient to it. Act according to your own conscience, and I think you will please yourselves. I am certain you

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Fraser.



will please me. (Hear.) Now, there must be something in this Bill after all, because since I have brought it in I see the newspapers are in the habit of calling me a great leader of Temperance. Now I think that is most insulting to the other members of Parliament. You have laws about this drink-traffic; they are surely laws intended to promote temperance, and all my opponents are just as anxious to promote laws for temperance as I am, only they promote other laws. They say the proper way to promote temperance is to force drink-shops on places where they are not wanted. (Hear.) Well, they come down to the House of Commons and vote in overwhelming numbers for promoting temperance in that way, and I vote the other way. They are all Temperance men; and I do wish the newspapers would drop calling me a Temperance advocate and Temperance leader. I am a politician trying to promote Temperance in a different way from what the publicans and their nominees do. (Hear, hear.)

Now, ladies and gentlemen, you must not be disheartened by all the opposition to your policy and support of this little Bill of mine, if you think that it is a proper way of carrying out the prohibition of the liquor-traffic. The French have a proverb—‘The absent are always in the wrong.’ Well, you may say that the opponents of any great vested interest are always in the wrong. You need not disturb yourselves; you cannot argue this question in a manner which will satisfy your opponents. If you appeal to their feelings, and describe the wretchedness (which indeed cannot be described) caused by this odious system, then you are called an ‘enthusiast,’ and a ‘methodist,’ and a ‘mawworm,’ and all sorts of nicknames. If you make a simple statement of the numbers of people taken up for drinking, the amount of money spent, and all the cost to the country, then you are told that you are telling old stories which everybody knows, and that you have nothing new to say or to suggest. While, on the other hand, if, astonished at the extraordinary arguments of your opponents, you sometimes venture, as I have been tempted to do, upon a mild joke, you are immediately told that you are a ‘buffoon.’ (Laughter.) Now don’t be disheartened by all this opposition. As I have said, you will always be found in the wrong by those who make their living by

supporting this great and iniquitous monopoly. (Hear.) Be not disheartened by opposition, but stick to your principles through evil report and through good report, and you will, by so doing, ultimately realize, as certainly as you are sitting there, that persistent effort in a righteous cause is certain to succeed. (Cheers.)

#### LOCAL VETO

(*Edinburgh, 1881*)

I feel a little nervous—(laughter)—before this great audience, not only because I well know the intelligence of a Scotch audience, but because I have been warned by the speeches of the chairman and the gentleman who seconded this resolution. In the first place, the chairman warns me that I must be moderate. I shall take his advice, and I hope that before I conclude I may be able to say that my moderation is known unto all men. (Renewed laughter.) Then my friend on the right has also been a warning to me. For once he seemed to me on the verge of deviating into Party politics, and I shall take care that when I sit down nobody shall know from anything I have said whether I am a sound and respectable Tory or a reprobate Radical. (Cheers.) Our question is far above Party politics, and I must say that I am glad it excites so much interest in the famous city of Edinburgh. I have been paying visits to a good many influential people lately, and to the constituencies of Cabinet Ministers. On Tuesday I addressed a large meeting of the constituents of Mr. Forster, and on Wednesday I addressed the constituents of Lord Hartington. I found them, as far as I could judge, unanimous and enthusiastic in demanding that the power should be given to the people to protect themselves from the liquor-traffic, which we are asking for now. And to-day I am addressing those, many of whom, I have no doubt, are the constituents of one who is greater in public estimation than even Lord Hartington or Mr. Forster, for I am addressing the constituents of Mr. Gladstone. (Prolonged cheering and slight hisses.) Mr. Chairman, observe that I am adhering scrupulously to my rule. (Laughter.) I do not say that he is greater than anybody else intellectually, morally, or

politically, but simply as a matter of fact he is the greatest man in the country—he is the Prime Minister. (Cheers.)

As far as I can judge from the tone and aspect of this immense meeting, you are as enthusiastic in favour of this power of protection being given to the people as those other constituencies to which I have alluded ; and I thank you for the feeling which you show, and I thank you as being in one sense a representative meeting—representing other constituencies in Scotland. I thank you for the support which you gave my resolution in the House of Commons from Scotland, when Scotch members of Parliament voted for my resolution in no less a proportion than eight to one of those who took part in the division. (Cheers.) They were in favour of protection ; protection not against free trade—(laughter)—not against fair trade, but protection against the worst trade which ever afflicted the country. But although I am glad to see you here to-night, I do not know I was anxious to come, because when I am asked to go and address meetings on this matter, in which I take so deep an interest, I always say to those who are arranging those meetings, what is the use of going to people who are converted ? I am a missionary ; send me among the heathen. (Laughter.) Some places in the South of England, where they talk beer, think beer, and believe in beer—(laughter)—I should do much more good there, because here in Scotland you are logical, intelligent, enlightened, and you have got rid of the old fallacies which I used to encounter in the beginning of these agitations. There may be two or three people here—a few who still believe in the old fallacies—and so before I go any further I just allude to them, although I will not dwell upon them.

First of all we were told, when we were trying to put a stop to public-houses and whiskey-shops, that it was very wrong to rob a poor man of his beer. My answer to that was, that the Government at present robs a man through his beer—(laughter)—makes him pay taxation, and pay a large sum for that which injures him. Well, we used to hear the old talk about Liberty of the Subject. Would you interfere with the liberty of the subject ? Certainly not. I am going to interfere with the licence of the publican, which is quite a different thing from the liberty of the subject—the licence of a man to do harm to his



fellow-subjects. That is all I want to interfere with ; and I think one has a right to interfere with a man who is injuring the public. I do not say on my authority that the drink-seller is injuring the public ; I say it on the authority of the *Edinburgh Review*. The *Edinburgh Review* must be an authority to an Edinburgh audience. It said long since that the liquor-traffic was a nuisance socially, morally, and politically. (Cheers.) That is a sort of thing which the law ought to interfere with. Then we used to have an argument that we were introducing the tyranny of a majority, if we let the bulk of the population interfere with the precious drinking-rights of the minority. But that is the case now. The magistrates are a very small minority of the people, and it is merely a majority of the minority of magistrates who have the power to license all these places among us. Therefore we are doing away with the tyranny of the minority. Well, I have said, I think that most Scotchmen pretty well agree with me that the time has now come when the people ought to have, somehow or other, some power to protect themselves from this drink-traffic.

But there are two questions which I shall discuss to-night, and which still remain. One question is—In what manner, in what mode, is this power to be entrusted to them ? and the other question is—How are we to get it at all from the Parliament and from the Government ? Well, now, the House of Commons has already laid down the lines on which our policy in this matter is to be moulded, and I think I had better quote the resolution which the House of Commons has passed, and which it has again reaffirmed, as it did during the last session of Parliament, because there is a good deal of misunderstanding about that resolution. That resolution was one which I copied from the recommendation of the Committee on Intemperance appointed by the Lower House of Convocation of the Province of Canterbury, and this was the recommendation. They say—‘Your committee, in conclusion, are of opinion that, as the ancient and avowed object of licensing the sale of intoxicating liquors is to supply a supposed public want, without detriment to the public welfare, a legal power of restraining the issue or renewal of licences should be placed in the hands of the persons most deeply interested and affected—namely, the inhabitants themselves—who are entitled



to protection from the injurious consequences of the present system.' Now, that was the resolution that I moved in the House of Commons, and now I want you to pay particular attention to the sentence in the report which succeeds that resolution, because that will make the resolution even clearer than as it stands. It says—'Such a power would, in fact, secure to the districts willing to exercise it, the advantages now enjoyed by the numerous parishes where, according to the reports furnished to your committee, owing to the influence of landowners, no sale of intoxicating liquors is allowed.' Now, I think that is as clear as anything well could be. The great landlords of extensive property at present have a veto on the issue of licences in their districts. Then my resolution says, Let us, instead of a private veto, give a public veto to the people. (Cheers.) Let us put the people exactly in the same position in which the great landowners are now, and allow them, if they please to do so, to veto—that is, prohibit—the issue of licences among them. Now, I think there never was a simpler resolution proposed to the House of Commons.

You, sir, said something about teetotalers and people who believed that to drink was wrong, and so forth. Well, they would be entitled to vote if we had a law embodying this resolution, and everybody else—the moderate drinkers, the immoderate drinkers, drunkards, habitual drunkards—would have the chance of saying whether they would have these public-houses among them. I am quite sure the hatred and detestation of these moral evils, these nuisances described in the *Edinburgh Review*, are not confined to teetotalers, but would be found to exist among many, many good citizens besides. (Cheers.)

When that resolution came on, we had great debates, as you know, and I listened with great interest to the speeches that able men made upon it, and I was astonished to find that the resolution meant, in their opinion, all sorts of things. I am not going to deny what 'able men' say—I am not an 'able man'—(laughter)—and I always listen with great respect to my betters, and I, when I heard them say that this resolution covered all sorts of things, was very much pleased to find it was such a good resolution. But all I mean by it is what I know it does mean, and that is that the

people of this country ought to be entrusted with a popular veto on these licences. (Cheers.) Some people say that that ought to be carried out by boards. Well, boards are all very good things, only we have so many of them that we are almost 'bored' to death, I sometimes think. (Laughter.) Boards are very good things, and, if the licensing party wish the licence to be through boards, I do not exactly know why they should not, only you must understand we prohibitionists do not go in for ourselves promoting anything of that sort. We do not believe that the quality of drink is altered according to the person that sells it, or according to the authority by which he is entitled to sell it. (Cheers.) And my notion of drink is that intoxicating drink has a tendency to intoxicate those who take it, whether it is sold by the saint or the sinner—(laughter)—and whether that saint or sinner has been licensed by an elected board or by those great and good men, the magistrates of the country. (Cheers.) You see we do not bother about boards. What we want is a veto pure and simple, and, if you are to veto through a board, that is doing the work twice over.

Besides, boards are things well known to you in Scotland. Why, you have the system here already. Your municipal authorities are elected by the people, and these municipal authorities virtually, as I understand it, appoint a small committee for licensing purposes among other things, composed of those eminent men, the Bailies. The Bailies, as I understand it, really are an elected board in Scotland, and are doing their best to promote sobriety, as all licensing authorities are. (Laughter.) But what is the result of these good men doing their best? Well, I have got a few figures here. Here we are in Modern Athens, and how many people do you suppose in the year 1880 were lying drunk and incapable in your streets? Upwards of 2,600. There is your licensing system. Worse than that. I am informed that upwards of 7,000 persons were apprehended in this town while drunk in the year 1880, and this proves that it is the system that is at fault, not the men. I will tell you how in a moment. Because though there were these 2,600 drunk and incapable, these 7,000 apprehended who were drunk, how many people were convicted for selling the drink improperly to them? Five.

(Laughter.) Now, that shows beyond the shadow of doubt that the system is the defect. There is no want of carrying it out, but you see the result. It is the same wherever you go. In Glasgow they apprehended 40,000 people when they were drunk. Well, it was the system there, not the men. How many liquor-sellers had offended in Glasgow at that time? Only four, the system is carried out so admirably. (Laughter.)

Hear what the *Scotsman* said about the state of things. (Laughter and cheers.) Well, the *Scotsman* spoke of the state of things in your country, 'That one person in every 10½ of the population was in the hands of the police or before the police magistrates during the year 1880.' That was in Glasgow, I believe. In Greenock the number was about one in every sixteen of the population, and here it was one in twenty who were taken up before the magistrates in the course of the year, and, besides that, I am told that now the Festive Season is approaching, when the licensing system came into fuller play than ever, in about a fortnight's time all the hospitals and infirmaries will be clearing decks for action, as it were making ready the cockpit of a man-of-war before she went into action, to receive the poor drunken wretches, lame and wounded, whom this glorious Licensing System will carry there. (Cheers.) Now you see that I do not think the licensing reformers can do much more. Nobody can bring accusations against the police. The police do their best; and nobody can bring accusations against the publicans because they are doing their duty—only four in one place and five in another are found out transgressing the laws. Therefore, I say, when you have this horrible state of things, this town of yours suffering evils like the evils of battle, this indescribable degradation and misery, I say it is not the men who carry out the system who are to blame, but it is the system, and you that keep the system up. (Cheers.) And the Scotch members of Parliament know that. I am happy to say they see this miserable failure, and this is the reason why they vote a majority of 8 to 1, when the reform we advocate is brought before the House.

And what do our opponents do? They cannot be satisfied, I think, with such facts as I have quoted; they must admit that



there is something wrong somewhere, but they say they must wait for the improved education of the people. I thought you were educated up to the very highest point in Edinburgh. (Laughter.) I know that in England we are spending nearly three millions a year on education. We have over three times as many children in schools as we had a generation ago, and yet we know what a state of things there is. I see Mr. Bright made a speech last week, and he seemed to put a good deal of stress upon the good that education would do, and he said that the Saxons, he had found out lately, were very sober people. I do not know very much about the Saxons. He said a short time ago they used to say, 'as drunk as a Saxon'; now they say, 'as sober as a Saxon.' Mr. Bright says there has been no alteration in the law regulating the drink-traffic there, and that they had got very well educated indeed. Well, I hope that that is all right; but I should like to know something more about them before pinning my faith to the story about the 'sober Saxon.' (Laughter.) But I hope it is all right. I hope education has done all that good there; but what I say is that it has not done it here. This state of things exists here that I have described along with the great facilities of education, which cannot be very much increased, I think. (Hear, hear.) Education has not done it here. Nobody talks about 'the sober Englishman.' A friend of mine was speaking the other day. He had been abroad on the Continent, and had heard a little Swiss song:—

'A Swiss will get drunk whenever he can  
Until he is drunk as an Englishman.'

(Great laughter.) So much for education in England—not in Saxony.

But do not run away with the idea that I am a disbeliever in education. Nobody believes in it more firmly than I do. I believe in it fanatically, and that is the reason why I am here to-night. It is because I believe that the 150,000 licensed sellers of drink educate the people to drunkenness, that I am here to-night to attack the system. Mr. Bright and his schools are all very well, but don't you know that people learn what is bad twice as quickly as they learn what is good? And these



150,000 licensed drink-sellers are paid by results—(laughter)—they are paid a premium on every glass of drink that they can persuade their fellow-subjects to consume, and that is why they are so earnest and diligent in business, that is the reason why the trade hitherto has been so active—they are paid by results ; while we poor people are going rampaging about the country preaching on temperance, and get no pay at all, and only get on by fits and starts. I think I can tell you why the country is so badly off in this matter : because there are three times as many people licensed as there were half a century ago, and drunkenness has not a bit diminished—I am afraid, rather increased. As I have told you, men learn evil quicker than they learn good, and my opinion is that these 150,000 licensed publicans are beating the schoolmasters and ministers out of the field.

Mr. Bright talks in his speech about ‘prisons and gaols darkening the land.’ So they do ; but why are they there ? The prisons and the gaols are little more than monuments of the energy of the publicans (cheers), and they are monuments of your disgrace, because you have hitherto maintained or allowed the laws by which they are licensed to do this great evil. You may say that I am undervaluing the work of the ministry. That is not the case at all. I believe in the power of the truth—but we must use the proper means for bringing the truth before the minds of the people. There is no parable in the Bible more instructive than the Parable of the Sower. He sowed good seed, but, when that seed fell where there were thorns, the thorns sprang up and choked it, and there was no crop : and you may depend upon it, the most pious and most eloquent minister may preach for a long time in a district infested with whiskey-shops and public-houses before he has anything like the crop which he ought to have by sowing the truth. (Cheers.)

Well, then, but other people say : ‘Oh, we need not do this thing now ; let us wait till good trade comes again.’ I don’t think that will do much, because good trade hitherto has meant a good trade for the publican ; and that means what Lord Rosebery described, when he said the enormous consumption of spirits which comes with good trade means an enormous amount of crime and pauperism. I think that there is something pathetic

in the position in which we are standing now. There seems to be a turn of the tide. There seems to be a hope that good trade is coming again in spite of that wicked Liberal Ministry—(laughter)—and manufacturers and merchants are looking forward to the improvement of business. There are other thoughts arising when we are looking forward to that business. I saw an article in the *Newcastle Chronicle* two or three days ago, in which it said: 'Trade is reviving. We are looking forward to better business, but with that improved trade there will come an increase of drinking and misery'; and it added, 'The beating of the wings of this destroying angel—this Drink!—is in the air, and, as in Egypt of old, we may have the result that there is not a house in which there is not one dead through this vice.' I think there can be nothing more awful than that, with good trade, good wages, they should live in this miserable state of things, and that the larger proportion of the earnings of many of them should go to the publicans.

But other people say a good house for the working people will stop drunkenness; if a man has a good house he will not drink. I think a man makes a house quite as much as the house the man, and it is because the people drink and have no money they live in these wretched houses. My friend General Neal Dow<sup>1</sup> explains it in this way. He said, if a pig were put into a parlour what would be the result? Do you think the parlour would reform the pig, or the pig demoralize the parlour? I think the latter would be the case.

But other people think if we should not go for this veto it will be quite sufficient if we go for Sunday closing. There again I sympathize with Sunday closing. No one is more in favour of that than I am. What wonders it has done in Ireland! We do not hear much that is good of Ireland. (Laughter.) But here are the results of Sunday closing there. Lord O'Hagan, late Lord Chancellor of Ireland, describes in strong language the benefits which that Sunday Closing Act in a few years has caused in Ireland; and there was Judge Lawson, who spoke not long since, when he said 'the decrease in crime might be attributed to the operation of the Sunday Closing Act.' (This

<sup>1</sup> Author of the Maine Liquor-Law.

is not prohibition, it is only prohibition on one day of the week instead of seven.) ‘And, perhaps, some gentleman will propose the extension of the Sunday Closing Act to every day of the week, and, if that succeeds, we shall have a millennium of sobriety.’ (Cheers.) Now, the idea of a millennium starting in Ireland—(loud laughter)—is the most extraordinary idea presented to the public; but that a judge, one of her Majesty’s judges on the bench, should use this as one of the illustrations of the wonderful power of prohibition in bringing benefits to the people, is of the utmost importance. But I need not talk about Sunday closing here. Why, you have had a quarter of a century and more of it—nearly thirty years in Scotland. Sometimes I see articles written about it in Scotland—articles by anonymous and irresponsible writers, who say that it is not popular, that it has done no good. I do not go, in testing the opinion of the country, to the sayings of irresponsible and anonymous writers. I go to the representatives chosen by the people—to your own old representative, Mr. Duncan M’Laren. (Loud cheers.) I go to your present representatives, Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Cowan, and I go to the whole body of Scotch members, and I say here, and you know I speak the truth, that there is not one of them, be he Liberal or be he Conservative, who dare go before a Scotch constituency and say, ‘I am in favour of the repeal of the Forbes Mackenzie Act,’ who would have the shadow of a chance to ever appear again in Parliament. (Loud cheers.) That one fact is worth all the newspaper articles that ever were written. It shows how the people really view the prohibition of the liquor-traffic for one day in seven. But what I wanted to say was, that was not enough. It is a grand step in the right direction, but it is not enough. . . . I say the veto—the veto for stopping the trade, that is what we want.

But you may ask, What is to become of the Government? The Government get thirty millions a year from this trade, and want it very badly. No doubt they want it, and I see in reading Mr. Trevelyan’s<sup>1</sup> speech of last Thursday he explains to us what tremendous preparations are being made for the destruction of our fellow-creatures on sea and on land; and enormous prepara-

<sup>1</sup> Then Secretary to the Admiralty.



tions for warfare with the whole world, as far as I can judge, are being made by the Government—and you know then that this money comes in very nicely for that sort of thing. In round numbers our army and navy costs us about thirty millions, and in round numbers we get that sum from the drink-traffic in England. We raise thirty millions by killing our own people with alcohol, and expend the same money on gunpowder to kill people abroad. (Great laughter.) These sums balance very nicely. That is the beauty of this system. (Renewed laughter.)

We talk about the Government doing this; Government stopping trade; Government preventing the opium-business, and so forth; but, when I say Government, I mean you. It is a free country, you are the sovereign people, and you make the Government. As a speaker before me said, the Government is just as you make it, and you are all alike in this matter. What did the *Morning Advertiser*, the leading organ of the publicans, say about the traffic? The Government and the Treasury were sleeping partners, and three-fourths of the profit derived from drink, viz. of every 20s. profit from drink the Treasury got 15s. Thus you are a sleeping partner with the publicans, and I am here to-night to do what little I can to rouse you out of this ignoble and selfish sleep.

This is a great audience, representing, I am sure, members of all the different classes of society, but I think that this question appeals more to the workmen than to any other class of the community. You, the working men, have much power now—a great and growing power, and you must work out your own salvation in this matter. You cannot expect the upper classes to be so keen about it as you are. The upper classes believe in drink. Of course, they drink moderately. The *Saturday Review* had an article not long since, in which the writer said, if he were to lose the cellar-key upon a Sunday, Sunday would be no Sunday to him (laughter), and, being thus devoted to drink—moderate drinking, of course—they think that your happiness depends upon it also. I say they believe in this drink, even the best of them.

And then, of course, you know the Trade is very powerful and



very rich—I suppose it is the richest trade anywhere. If you look into a small town, you generally find it is the brewer who gets richer than anybody else, and the distiller in Scotland gets richer than anybody else. Two or three years ago, when trade was bad, the licensed victuallers had a grand festival at Burton, the headquarters of the brewing interest, and they said, ‘Burton is the green spot of England; whatever trade suffers, this trade goes on; drinking goes on steadily; the brewer and distiller thrive apace.’ They build churches and chapels, and I honour them for that. I see now they are getting on in another direction—Mr. Disraeli took one step in that direction, and Mr. Gladstone has taken another step, and two of them have been made peers, they have been raised from the ‘beerage to the peerage.’ (Laughter.)

We see what tremendous powers we have to fight against. Notwithstanding all that, the great fact remains that the Parliament of the United Kingdom, voting on my resolution, and supported by twenty-three members of the present Administration, have declared that you, the people of this country, have the right when you choose to put a stop to that trade. That is the position in which we stand at present. What we have to get now is to make the Government act upon that resolution which has been passed, and make them carry it out in what is called practical legislation. And I want to know what reform is more important or more pressing. I do not know one. Mr. Trevelyan said long ago there is nothing which our rulers are prepared to give which is one-twentieth part of the importance of this veto-power. I want to know why you Britons are to be considered so inferior to your countrymen, the Canadians, who live on the other side of the Atlantic, where they have this power already. They have an Act very similar to my Permissive Bill, and which has worked with the greatest satisfaction.

Let me quote about Canada from the *Scotsman*. I am glad to quote from the *Scotsman*. I can appreciate the ability and profuseness with which facts are given by the *Scotsman*. I can honour a consistent enemy, and am sure that there is no one more consistent or courageous than the *Scotsman* in defending the privileges of the publicans. (Laughter and cheers.) There

is something almost touching in his devotion. (Laughter.) The Thanes fly from him; public opinion is receding; the constituencies are deserting him; the members, wicked men, in a body are voting for Lawson; but there he remains, firm and immovable as a rock; and I believe that, when at last we get Local Option, when the whiskey-shops are swept away from a renovated Scotland, the last thing we shall see will be the editor of the *Scotsman* sitting on the last remaining whiskey-barrel—(loud laughter)—shouting ‘No surrender.’ (Renewed laughter and cheers.)

Allow me to quote from the *Scotsman* a remark of Lord Lorne’s<sup>1</sup> that the ‘absolute prohibition of the sale of intoxicating liquors throughout the whole of the north-western territories secured the most perfect peace and order in those infant communities.’ Surely, you in Scotland are as intelligent as Canadians, and as able to manage your own affairs. I say you have a right to be allowed to remove these temptations which are thrust upon you, and here is my authority—Mr. Gladstone himself. (Cheers.) I rest my whole case on these sentences that I am going to read to you. Mr. Gladstone was speaking about the Sunday Closing Bill in Wales. He alluded to the Irish Bill, and he said ‘in the case of Ireland it was agreed that, if the sentiment of the country was in sympathy with the proposal, it ought to be assented to. If people were desirous to set aside this temptation, would it not be a cruel thing to refuse their desires?’ (Cheers.) If it is a cruel thing in Ireland and Wales—if it is a cruel thing thus to thrust temptation upon the people against their will or assent—is it not equally a cruel thing in England and Scotland—(cheers)—as well as in Ireland to thrust upon them day by day those temptations which are bringing them down to crime and vice and degradation?

Now, Mr. Chairman, what I say is this. Our cause is a strong one, and let me sum it up. The House of Commons has twice declared that the people are entitled to the possession of this veto-power. You have in office the strongest and the most able Prime Minister that the country has seen. You have the House

<sup>1</sup> Governor-General of Canada 1878–1883; became Duke of Argyll, 1900.

of Commons—and my fellow-members on this platform will bear me out in what I say—you have the House of Commons, more imbued with a reforming spirit than any Parliament in our generation ; and you have an overwhelming public opinion out of doors to back them on in the course of the agitation. Now is the time for us to speak in a manner which cannot be misunderstood, and to declare what we will have done.

If we have whispered truth,  
Whisper no longer ;  
Speak as the thunder doth,  
Stern and stronger. (Cheers.)

Do that, and the day is not far distant when the power will be placed in the hands of the people to sweep away the most deadly obstacle which yet bars the progress of a great and noble nation in all the paths of peace, prosperity, and virtue. (Loud cheers.)

#### COMPENSATION TO PUBLICANS

(*House of Commons*, 1888)

I share in the hope expressed, that this Bill <sup>1</sup> will prove a great benefit to the country. I have observed that in the political language of the day the proper thing is to call it a ' frankly democratic ' Bill, and as such I treat it. I desire in the remarks I intend to make to the House to deal only with one question involved in the Bill, and I think it is a question which has excited quite as much interest as that of proportional representation, or of the unit of the parish, or of the creation of County Aldermen, and that is the question of licensing. I believe that, for every one person who is interested in the general provisions of the Bill, there are, at any rate among the working classes of the population, ten persons who take a much greater interest in how the liquor-traffic is going to be dealt with. With the view of having the debate confined within proper limits, and to prevent it rambling generally over the Bill, I put down a notice of amendment to the second reading, not with the object of dividing against the second reading, but with the object, as I have said,

<sup>1</sup> The Local Government Act, 1888.

of getting a fair discussion on the licensing clauses of the Bill. The Speaker, however, very kindly told me that it was not exactly the orthodox manner of dealing with the question. I will, however, read the amendment to the House, because it will show what I intended, and will help to restrain the discussion within proper bounds. The amendment I put on the paper ran as follows: 'That no measure for the reform of local government will be just or satisfactory which imposes additional financial burdens on the public as compensation for the withdrawal from liquor-sellers of privileges obtained by the grant of annual licenses.' I am not able to move that as an amendment, but, at any rate, it will be my text, and on that text I mean to preach against the new departure which has been initiated in this Bill.

I shall endeavour to define what I mean by a new departure. This Bill is an attempt to subsidize one class of traders in this country at the public expense; it is an attempt to fine local committees for efforts to purify themselves and improve their own position; it is an attempt to strengthen and fortify and perpetuate a system against which public opinion is steadily rising, and will rise still higher. And what is that system? That system is the licensing system, the system that has stimulated the people of this country to consume those intoxicating drinks which produce so much harm to the community. I am justified in using this language. I remember the late Lord Iddesleigh<sup>1</sup> saying, when speaking several years ago on this question, that the national conscience was at length fairly aroused. When the national conscience is aroused, it is unjust to fortify and strengthen the system on which the drinking of intoxicating liquors is based, and to establish a vested interest in that in which a vested interest has never existed before. What is the House to understand by this Bill? Why, that beyond any doubt it was establishing a new vested interest. I take my proof of that from the speech of the right hon. gentleman, the President of the Local Government Board.<sup>2</sup> When the right hon. gentleman introduced the Bill he said: 'We say to the trade, "We recognize your claim to compensation—we give you practically

<sup>1</sup> Formerly Sir Stafford Northcote.

<sup>2</sup> The Right Hon. C. T. Ritchie.



a vested interest by the Bill.”’ Now, that is as clear as anything possibly can be. It was not a vested interest before, but the right hon. gentleman stated that he himself by his Bill proposed to give them that vested interest. It is perfectly true that there has been no vested interest in the licence before.

I do not want to tire the House with quotations, but really in the speech I have to make I shall have to read several quotations, because it is of very little consequence what my opinion is, but it is of great consequence that I should produce the facts on which I base my suggestions. Allow me to take, in the first place, one statement made by Mr. Justice Field in the Court of Queen’s Bench in November, 1882. The learned judge stated then, in so many words, that the legislature recognizes no vested right at all in any holder of a licence : it does not treat the interest as a vested one in any way ; and I challenge any lawyer in the House, no matter where he sits, or to what party he belongs—any lawyer who has any reputation to lose at all—to rise in his place and to say that Mr. Justice Field was wrong in what he said. The right hon. gentleman, the member for West Birmingham<sup>1</sup> said that that position was disputed. Who disputed it ? Nobody but the right hon. gentleman himself, as far as I am aware of ; but, if it is disputed, I will read a somewhat longer quotation. It is so important that I cannot skip a word of it, and the House will see why I quote it when I tell them from whom I quote. The quotation is from a letter written by the late Mr. Thomas Nash, barrister-at-law, and counsel to the Licensed Victuallers’ Association. I always like to go to my opponents for my facts. Writing to the *Morning Advertiser*, a very influential paper, on the 5th of September, 1883 (it was just after the right hon. gentleman [Mr. Ritchie] had been indulging in the little legislation to which I shall have to allude by-and-by), Mr. Nash said : ‘ A still more unfortunate result of the Darwen case was that it promulgated and divulged what had hitherto been more or less of a professional secret, viz. : that, subject to appeal, the licensing magistrates can refuse to renew the licence of any and every holder of an on-licence. Till then it had always been popularly supposed that the holder of an on-licence, certainly a

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. J. Chamberlain.

full licence, had a vested interest, and even the teetotallers always spoke as if they recognized such an interest.' That was a mistake, but if teetotallers said so they must have been drunk. 'Now, I am sorry to say, having looked into this question most exhaustively, and compared notes with many of my brethren well versed in these matters, that there cannot be the smallest doubt that, in the strict sense, no such thing as a vested interest exists, and that, subject to appeal, the magistrates can refuse to renew the licence of the largest, most useful, and best-conducted hotel in England. I daresay this will stagger many owners.' I have no doubt it did. 'But it is high time that the Trade fully realized their position, and did not remain an instant in a sense of false security. More than this, as a matter of policy, the mere mention of the term Vested Interest should be avoided, as it infuriates every Court from the Queen's Bench downwards.' That is a very long quotation, and I will only now quote a very short one, which is the latest. I believe that my legal friends will admit that *The Justice of the Peace* is one of the best authorities on legal matters, and what does it say in the last issue but one? It says there is no doubt that the right hon. gentleman's plan 'recognizes for the first time a vested interest in a licence.' I think I have proved my case, but there is plenty more proof if the gentlemen desire me to adduce it. I have proved my case, and I shall really be surprised if anybody gets up and says there is a legal right to a renewal of a licence in any of these cases.

The legal case is gone, as far as I am concerned. I have overthrown it, but I know perfectly well what line will be taken. The right hon. gentleman the member for West Birmingham, in his speech, disputed the legal case, though he gave no grounds for doing so, and then he went on to the question of equity—that is, of course, arguable ground. I will, then, argue the question on the ground of equity. Let us consider the case of precedents. I have often heard the slave-trade talked about as a precedent. The slave-trade was abolished in 1807, and I have often heard it talked of as a precedent. The slave-dealers in that day reckoned their vested interest in the slave-trade at 100,000,000*l*. They never got a single penny of compensation. Of course, I know someone will get up and say, 'But

we paid 20,000,000*l.* to the slave-owners when the slave-trade was abolished.' Yes, so we did in the year 1833 ; but I wonder what we would have done in the year 1888, with a democratic Parliament representing the people. (Hear, hear.) I do not think the slave-owners would have got any compensation ; if compensation had been paid, it would have been to the slaves : indeed, in the year 1833 the compensation was only tolerated as a means of greasing the wheels. They never would have thought of admitting the grant but as a means of ensuring the passing of the Bill. What did Lord Brougham say about the slave-trade ? He said, ' Trade is honest, it is innocent, it is useful, it is harmonising, it is immensely beneficial ; whereas this infernal traffic is exactly the reverse, and can only be called a crime.' Why do I quote that case ? The Archbishop of Canterbury <sup>1</sup> said the other day that the liquor-trade, as carried on among the native races, was worse than the slave-trade. I agree with what was stated by the Archbishop of Canterbury, but I go further, and apply the remark to the English. Then I have heard it said sometimes, ' Oh, but when you indulge in the compulsory acquisition of land you pay heavy compensation.' So we do ; but my answer is, that we acquire nothing here ; we take nothing away from anybody. The licence emanated from the Legislature ; it emanated from the people themselves ; the people grant the licence ; and, when the people choose, they have the right to say we will withhold that licence. There was no acquiring of any property of the public. The Irish Church was quoted. Well, but the Irish clergy were licensed to preach for their lives ; but the publican had never been given a licence for his life ; he was only given it for one single year. Then we hear talk of the abolition of purchase in the army, but officers are entitled to serve under the commissions until a given age, and then they are entitled to a pension ; but a publican's ' commission ' is only for one year, and it can be taken away.

I say again that this is an absolutely new departure, and I keep repeating this because it is important. My right hon. friend (Mr. Ritchie), who, I notice, is going to answer me, shakes his head. I think, however, that the right hon. gentleman will have a great difficulty in proving that this is not a new departure.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Benson.



Take the case of the liquor-traffic itself. Whenever have we compensated it when we have taken away its privileges? Over and over again this House has taken away an hour here and an hour there, but it has never thought of giving compensation. Look at Scotland, look at Ireland, look at Wales. In each of these countries we have taken away a seventh part of the trade from the publican. I remember the late Mr. P. J. Smyth,<sup>1</sup> a very eloquent Irish member, proposing that there should be some compensation given when the public-houses were closed on Sundays in Ireland; but the proposition was laughed out of the House. The hon. member did get some fifteen or sixteen Irish members to vote with him, but the rest of the House voted against him. Let us now go back to the year 1877, when the publicans' friends, the Tory party, were in office. An Irish member passed a Bill through the House providing that the rateable value for beer-houses shall be reduced, and at one fell swoop 557 Dublin beer-houses were deprived of their licences. No one gave them a penny, and it was never called an Irish grievance. Take the case of England itself; in the last century distillation was absolutely prohibited, with the best effects to the country. No one, however, got any compensation. In Ireland, in the present century, a prohibition was enacted in regard to distillation, and no one was compensated. Go from England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales to our Colonies, or to America, or wherever the English language is spoken. In all of these places licences have been over and over, and over again, taken away from liquor-sellers; and in no part of the civilized world have they ever got a penny of compensation. In Canada, our own country, have the publicans ever got compensation when they have been deprived of their licences? I remember asking Lord Lorne what was the effect of stopping licences in Canada—what was the effect of prohibition in Canada? He answered 'Oh, it makes the whole difference between civilization and barbarism!' Why should we compensate people for promoting barbarism?

To come nearer home, what does the right hon. gentleman propose to do in this very Bill? He proposed to put it in the

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Co. Westmeath.



power of the local authorities to shut up public-houses in England on Sundays, Good Fridays, and Christmas Days, and he does not give a penny of compensation. Surely, if robbery is right, it is right on every day of the week ; if it is wrong, it does not make it better to do it on a good day. The right hon. gentleman says, ' I will rob them on Sundays, Good Fridays, and Christmas Days ; but, if the hon. member for Cumberland tries to rob them on week-days, he is a notorious villain.' (Laughter.) Now I come to the case which the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Ritchie) knew perfectly well I should come to. It so happened that, in the year 1882, when the Liberals were in office, and the right hon. gentleman sat upon the Opposition benches, he brought in a capital Bill. There was at that time a certain class of liquor-dealers who were able to get their licences irrespective of the whole of the magistrates ; but my right hon. friend, by the Bill he brought in, put these men on the same footing as ordinary publicans. The right hon. gentleman carried his Bill through the House, and I remember complimenting him upon his successful effort. The men who were thus dealt with came up as usual to get their licences. It was at a place called Darwen, and, when they came before the bench, the magistrates said, ' No, a Bill has been passed which gives us the same power over you as we have over the ordinary publican,' and they refused some twenty or thirty licences. The holders of those licences went away without a penny of compensation, and probably they are now rotting in workhouses and cursing the name of my right hon. friend.

Now, the right hon. gentleman (Mr. J. Chamberlain) talked as if it were a system to compensate people when we alter our laws. I say it is not a system, and no one has ever treated it so. This House is full of landlords and persons who hold land ; many of them were alive in the days before Free Trade. What was their position then ? There was a law in this country by which the produce of their lands was artificially made dear and their land the more valuable. Popular opinion changed, Free Trade was passed, the artificial price of their produce was done away with by legislation, and they said they were going to be ruined. No one, however, gave them a penny of compensation ; and why

should the landlords of public-houses get any compensation? And then there are the Irish landlords—poor fellows, they are always being got at in some way or other. In 1881 we commenced with them, and the right hon. gentleman (Mr. J. Chamberlain) had not many bowels of compassion for them in those days. I do not know whether the right hon. gentleman has now, but this is the way he talked about the landlords in 1881. Let the House remember how he talks now about compensation, and contrast that picture with this—contrast the former days with these days. In 1881 the right hon. gentleman (Mr. J. Chamberlain), speaking about Irish landlords, said ‘I cannot conceive that they have any right to claim compensation for the restriction and limitation of powers which they ought never to have been permitted to enjoy. In our English legislation there are numberless precedents in which legal rights have been found to be in conflict with public morality and public interest, and have been restricted and limited, and I am not aware of any such cases in which compensation has been given to those who have thus been treated.’ That was pretty good, considering the speech the right hon. gentleman has made to-night. Well, I hope I have proved to the House, first of all, that no legal right to compensation exists; and secondly, that there is no precedent for it.

Now I come to argue the point as well as I can on the ground of equity. When we take public money and give it to certain persons, I presume we give it to them for some services rendered by them; if we do not we are wronging the public. Now, what national services have these drink-sellers done that they should be endowed with a sum of national money? Soldiers are given large sums of money when they have risked their lives in killing other people for the good of their country. (Laughter.) It may perhaps be said that there is some similarity between publicans and soldiers. (Renewed laughter.) I admit that publicans are engaged in a most deadly trade. If we look at the returns of mortality, we find that there is no more dangerous trade than that of the publican; the death-rate among those who deal in alcohol is higher than that of any other trade, but still they are not on the same footing as soldiers, for they have not done anything to defend the country. On the contrary, Sir William

Gull, M.D., said that the article which they are licensed to deal in was the most destructive agent known to the Faculty, and the right hon. gentleman, the leader of the Opposition<sup>1</sup> once said, and I suppose the expression has been quoted three or four times a night ever since at public meetings, but notwithstanding that I shall quote it again—‘that the evils which drink brought upon this country equalled the accumulated evils of war, pestilence, and famine.’ I do not want to use strong language myself, but I like to quote it. (Laughter.) There was once a great brewer, the late Charles Buxton, who had a seat in this House, and surely he was a competent authority. He wrote an article in which he said, ‘that the struggle of the Church, the library, and the school-house with the public-house and the gin-shop was one development of the war between heaven and hell.’ Why we should compensate those who carry on this war against their countrymen exceeds my comprehension. What have the publicans done? The right hon. gentleman the leader of the House<sup>2</sup> two or three years ago discovered Ireland, and has been made leader of the House. (Laughter.) These publicans have discovered a way of getting 120,000,000% a year out of the pockets of their countrymen, but have they done anything for art and literature? Is the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Ritchie) going to reward them, although Lord Chesterfield in the last century described them as the artists in human slaughter? Let me ask any of the clergymen of the Church of England, friends of the right hon. gentleman and of the Conservative party, whether they believe that the liquor-traffic has done any good in their district. Let the right hon. gentleman produce a single man who will say ‘a publican came into my parish, and the people have become more moral and sober than they were before.’ The right hon. gentleman knows that such a thing is absurd; he knows that every clergyman, poor-law guardian, and schoolmaster, would say, if asked, that the places where liquor is sold are the curses of the community in which they are placed. Yet the dealers in intoxicating liquor are the people the right hon. gentleman is going to compensate out of the hard earnings of the people of the country.

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone.

<sup>2</sup> The Right Hon. W. H. Smith.



In making these remarks I am not finding fault with the men ; only with the trade. I have no right to find fault with the men ; they act under the law, and we in the House of Commons are responsible for what the publicans do. The publicans are answerable to the law if they break the law ; but, so long as they conform to the law, and Parliament does not alter it, Parliament is responsible, and it would be a cowardly thing to blame the drink-sellers. Many of them were doing a great deal of good. I do not know whether the House has ever heard the story of an American who went to Dublin. This man was shown over all the great works of Guinness. First of all he was taken to the church, a splendid church ; he was next taken to a school, a splendid school ; then he was taken to the brewery, where the money was made. The American then said, ‘ He appears to me to be a most remarkable man, for he seems to run education, salvation, and damnation.’ (Much laughter.) Talk about ruining these men ! they will find some channel for usefulness and profit. Hon. members need not be afraid on that score.

Now, I want to know why the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Ritchie) has meddled with these people at all ? Why, because he was obliged to do it ; he would not have touched a hair of their heads if he could have helped it, but he has meddled with this question because he knows there is a demand from public opinion outside. What did public opinion demand ? Why, for the last generation, more or less, there has been a demand, the demand is ever growing, for power for the people to protect themselves from the establishment of drinking-shops among them. They want to be protected from nuisances. Now, there again is a strong thing to say, but I will give my proof that I do not say it myself. It has been stated in the *Edinburgh Review* that the liquor-trade is a nuisance physically, socially, morally, and politically, and the people feel it in consequence, and have sent innumerable petitions to the House of Commons. Three times this House has declared by solemn vote that the people of this country, in their own localities, ought to have the right to protect themselves from these places. I must quote again to make the matter sure, but I will only quote one of the resolutions—namely, the last. I succeeded in getting the House to pass the resolution



twice, and, as nothing was done,<sup>1</sup> I got a third one passed, and this time the House said the matter was urgent. Since then the House had done nothing. The last resolution was, 'That the best interests of the nation urgently require some efficient measure of legislation by which, in accordance with the resolution already passed and reaffirmed by the House, a legal power of restricting the issue of licences for the sale of intoxicating liquors may be placed in the hands of the persons most deeply interested and affected—namely, the inhabitants themselves.' I am happy to say that the resolution was supported by six members of the Cabinet of that day, April 27, 1883, and that one of those persons who supported it was the great compensator, the right hon. gentleman the member for West Birmingham.

Now, that is what the people want; that is what they ask for; there is no great demand for anything else regarding the licensing system. There are gentlemen who are anxious for the reform of the licensing laws. I give them all honour. They represent a number of persons outside the House, and those persons are trying to make the best of a bad thing; but there is no great demand for such a reform of the licensing system. What is demanded is power for the people to protect themselves against the licensing system whatever it may be. They simply say, 'Leave the system as you please, or alter it as you please; but, whether it remains as it is now, or whether it is altered, all we want is one little clause which shall say, no licensing authority shall place these drink-shops in a district where the people by a large majority say they do not want them.' That is the whole thing. People seem to think sometimes that I advocate something that is in opposition to other people. Nothing of the sort; my little clause would fit into anybody's Bill. (Laughter.) All we object to is living in England under a Coercion Act, by which licensing authorities are able to force liquor-shops on places where they are not wanted. Yes, the House knows well enough that I am speaking the truth when I say that that is really what the people of England want.

As I have said, the House has passed three resolutions, but they have always been told to wait for the carrying of them out, until the Local Government Bill was introduced. Really, it is

like the old story of a man who was brought up for breach of promise of marriage, and he said it would be very hard to punish him, because he was perfectly willing to fulfil his promise in the year 1980. It looked to me like that. We never seemed to get forward when waiting for a Local Government Bill. That Bill, however, came at last, and we heard the able speech of the right hon. gentleman the President of the Local Government Board. I am sure that, wicked Radical that I am, the right hon. gentleman will not be angry if I compliment him upon the ability he displayed on the introduction of the Bill. The Bill came at last, and when I heard the sentence fall from his lips, 'We transfer the licensing power from the magistrates to the elected authorities,' I was awfully pleased. I knew, directly he said that, that the corner-stone was out of the old rotten edifice, and that it was only a question of time when the edifice would tumble about our ears. I was pleased with him for taking the first step in advance in a path in which I was ready to extend the helping hand of fellowship to him—(hear, hear)—but he has spoiled it all. If he had stopped there, and simply said, 'We transfer the licensing powers from the magistrates to the local bodies,' he would have done a good thing; he would have taken a long step. But he took a most extraordinary course, and fell very foul of me. He said 'he was a greater democrat than I am.' He said, speaking for the Government, 'We have more confidence in the elected bodies than the hon. member for Cumberland.'

Well, perhaps he may have more confidence in the elected bodies, but he has not so much confidence in the people who elect them. What he means by my not having confidence in them is this. He knows, as I know, that, if you give power to do evil to any set of men, elected, or selected, or born, or bred, or anybody else, they will do that evil. That was all I meant by saying I had no great confidence in them. Why should I have? There are a great many of my Scotch fellow-members sitting here, and they know as well as I that for generations past elected bodies in Scotland have had power of licensing, and they know as well as I, that the demand for Local Veto against even these local authorities is as great in Scotland as it is in

England. But, if the right hon. gentleman has the confidence in the people of which he boasts, and which I hope he really feels, I ask him why does he block, hamper, thwart, and obstruct, these bodies after he has got them constructed? He makes it more difficult then to get rid of a licence by his system, and, when he talks of trusting people, it is a regular farce. Time will not allow me to go minutely into the machinery he proposes; but I may say that it is elaborate machinery, and is like our registration-laws, which are intended to prevent people from getting on the register. This machinery is intended to prevent people from getting rid of public-houses. I saw it stated somewhere that the 'option of the electoral division is non-existent as against the will of the licensing division, and the option of the licensing division is non-existent as against that of the County Councils.' What chance will you have with these County Councils far away from the people, and not knowing the people of the locality? I imagine the people going up to them to come before Alderman Chaplin<sup>1</sup> or Alderman Barttelot.<sup>2</sup> Why you would never get rid of a public-house at all. The right hon. gentleman knows very well that the great nuisance which has hitherto existed under the licensing system is that there is an appeal, from the people who know something about the matter, to the people who know nothing about it. It appears that the right hon. gentleman wishes the matter to be passed through one sieve after another, in the hope that at last a sieve will be found too small to let it get through.

I wish the noble lord the member for Paddington<sup>3</sup> were here, because I have something to say about him. He says that the Temperance people—he is a great authority with the Temperance people—(laughter)—ought to take this Bill, because Local Option is embalmed and enshrined in the Bill. It is, indeed. (Renewed laughter.) It is embalmed, it is enshrined, and it is dead and buried. (Laughter.) It is only fit to be kept in a Tory museum as a specimen of how not to do it. No; I got a resolution this morning which seems to me to put the position with regard to

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for North-west Sussex.

<sup>3</sup> The Right Hon. Lord Randolph Churchill.



this Bill very clearly. It is a resolution passed by the North of England Temperance League—by men who have spent their lives in trying to benefit their fellow-creatures by getting rid of intoxicating drinking, and who know even as much about the matter as the noble lord the member for Paddington. Mr. Arthur Pease was in the chair, a staunch supporter, a fanatical supporter, of the present Government, and what does the resolution declare? It declares that the Government proposals are calculated to delay, distract, and prevent just and righteous legislation on the matter, and merit hearty condemnation.' Now, I say, and I say it deliberately, that this scheme for thwarting local opinion and for endowing decayed liquor-sellers, is a deliberately devised plan to hoodwink and rob the nation. (Hear, hear.) Now, my right honourable friend (Mr. Ritchie) will have to answer that.

I will give my proof. First of all I will call the Prime Minister. What did Lord Salisbury say at Newport a good while ago? He found it necessary when he got to Wales to talk about drink—everybody must talk about drink when he goes to Wales. Talking about this Bill—for the Bill was on the stocks even then—Lord Salisbury said: 'One reason why the local authority would be a good authority to manage the licensing question is that, if any unfair encroachment is made on the industry of the publicans or others, fair compensation undoubtedly must be given, and the local authority would have to provide that fair compensation, and I believe that the terror of having to provide that fair compensation would furnish no inconsiderable motive to induce it to be very chary of withdrawing such licences.' He would give the people an instrument with which to defend themselves, but fine them if they used it. That was statesmanlike, was it not? When I read the scheme for hoodwinking the people, I said to myself, 'Mr. James Lowther was not very far wrong when he said at York, last winter, "that there was as much honour on the turf as there was in statesmanship."' (Laughter.) Now, I come to the noble lord the member for Paddington, who is even more frank, if possible, than the Prime Minister. The noble lord went to Sunderland, and made there a very remarkable



speech, perhaps the most remarkable political speech of the recess. He said : ' I have had great and peculiar opportunities of ascertaining what I may well believe to be the generally prevailing tendency and disposition of the mind of the Tory party; in Parliament and in the country, and, though possibly here and there I may go a little beyond it, still I don't think I shall be very far out.' He made a splendid speech in one sense. He made one of the greatest indictments against the liquor-traffic I have ever read, and I said, ' Oh, I only wish I could speak like that at Alliance meetings ! ' The noble lord told his audience how a police magistrate told him that ' at least two-thirds of all the crime which came before him arose from the unrestrained sale of drink.' (He was wrong there, because there is no unrestrained sale of drink.) ' What I may call the fatal facility of recourse to the public-house and the gin-shop.' It is that fatal facility which we sanction by our legislation, and which the right hon. gentleman is doing very much to perpetuate. I am told it was one of the finest spectacles ever seen. The platform from which the noble lord spoke was filled with liquor-people, and their faces were studies. I heard a rumour—I don't know whether it was true—that one man had a fit. This noble Tory democrat was very severe on the right hon. gentleman the member for Midlothian,<sup>1</sup> who, he said, had voted for the resolution of the hon. member for Cumberland, and yet had done nothing. He said there was no reason why ' legislation which affects the health, the lives, and the morals of millions of individuals in the country ought to be retarded or delayed, on account of constitutional organic changes in the relations between Ireland and Great Britain. But although Mr. Gladstone was vague, I will, with your permission, not be vague.' There was laughter and cheers—and a few sentences further on, the noble lord said, ' But up to this point I am still vague, and you may say, " Would you give to the local authority power to prohibit totally all sorts of drink within their district ? " Well, I would and I wouldn't.' There was again laughter, and a cry of ' Let's have it out.' ' In theory I would, and in practice I would not.' There was more laughter, and loud cheers from

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone.

the licensed victuallers on the platform. Was there ever such a speech as that? It reminds one of the Yankee who, when he was asked if he was in favour of the Maine Law, replied 'Yes, I am in favour of the Law, but I am agin its enforcement.' (Laughter.) The noble lord went on to reveal the whole plot, and to throw a ray of light on the whole policy of the Government. He said, 'If you deal genuinely with the question, I do not think you could withhold from the local authority practically unlimited powers with regard to the drink-question, but I would introduce two very salutary checks upon any impulsive or fanatic or harsh action, and they would be checks connected with the pocket.' And his checks were the transferring of all licence-revenues to local authorities, and compensation for vested interests. That was his scheme, a scheme of robbery and jobbery and bribery all round.

Well now, the right hon. gentleman, the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) has played a melancholy part. He had a grand opportunity, an opportunity such as seldom falls to the lot of a statesman. For generations his poorer fellow-countrymen have asked for this power of protection. He might have given it them. He might have done something far more satisfactory than that; he might have dished the Whigs; he might have made the question his own, and done what our Liberal Government, for some reason or other, have been restrained from doing. He might have taken away a great political grievance, a grievance which is always troubling us in our political fights, wherever they take place. He might have done that, and thus have made an everlasting name and earned the gratitude of his countrymen. Instead of that, what has he done? The people have asked for bread and he has given them a stone. Instead of taking the manly course of trusting his countrymen, he has preferred to be the humble instrument of the noble lord the member for Paddington, the great apostle of Sham. Instead of having done anything for the benefit of his fellow-countrymen, he will be known through history as the first man who in the British House of Commons attempted to legalize blackmail.

Well, I don't know whether this House will pass the scheme

or not. Of course it may be passed with the aid of recreant Radicals who will vote for anything ; but, if it is passed, yours shall be the responsibility and yours shall be the shame. Although you may succeed now, if there be a spark of Liberalism left the Liberal party will never rest until it reverses a policy like this—a policy, in my opinion, never exceeded in the meanness of its conception, in the injustice of its scope, and in the cruelty of its bearing upon the struggling and industrious masses in this country. (Cheers.)

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## APPENDIX II

### *Sir Wilfrid Lawson to T. Fisher Unwin*

YOU are good enough to ask me to write a few lines of my ‘Appreciation and Reminiscences of Cobden.’

I fear that I have little to say which is worth publication. But, as Peter said to the poor man, ‘Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee.’

Well, then, first as to my ‘appreciation’ of Cobden, this is how I look upon him. If statesmanship consists in working unselfishly, intelligently, and earnestly for the lasting welfare of the public, regardless of personal considerations, then I look on Cobden as the greatest statesman of the last century. So much for my ‘appreciation’ of him.

As to ‘reminiscences,’ it was my privilege to be acquainted with him during the few years between my entrance into Parliament in the year 1859 and his death in 1865.

Concerning his manners, habits, and charming personality, I have therefore nothing more to say than has been often well said already by many of his contemporaries.

But I can say that the impression which he made on me both in public and in private was that he was ‘a man without guile’; a man who looked on Politics not as a profession, nor as a trade, but simply as a means of promoting the welfare and happiness of his countrymen and of the world. He knew that charity begins at home, and he appeared to me to feel that, if he could make his own country prosperous, peaceful, contented and

happy, he was taking the most practical step for ultimately also benefiting the world. He was, in short, a 'Little Englander.' True, that is a political nickname which has only been invented lately, and which does great credit to its inventor, for this country is very much governed by good nicknames. But it pretty well describes those who do not believe that greatness is goodness and that smallness is sin; but who do believe that doing unto other nations as you would have other nations do to you is a wiser and sounder policy than that of the swagger-and-slaughter-species which is so highly appreciated in the present day.

You see I am rambling away to Mr. Cobden's policy rather than to the characteristics of the man himself. Yet his politics were the man, and for all time the names of Cobden and of Free Trade will be inseparably connected—an illustration of the truth of the lines which say—

So, when a good man dies,  
For years beyond our ken  
The light he leaves behind him lies  
Upon the paths of men.

I can only say for myself that it was the early teachings of Cobden and Bright which formed the political creed—if there be such a thing as a political creed—to which I have always adhered, and from which I, in these modern days, see not the slightest reason to depart.

I rejoice that you propose to re-issue some of the writings of Mr. Cobden which contain his political views.

They must do good if people will 'read' them, though *there* is the difficulty, as, what with football, cricket, military pageants, gambling, and drinking, the Democracy are rather like the poor maid-of-all-work who said she always was tired,

For she lived in a world where so much was required.

I am glad, however, to think that the Cobden Club (of which I am one of the original members) has done a good deal, during all the years since we lost Mr. Cobden, to preach and propagate the pure doctrine of Free Trade. Mr. Potter, the member for Rochdale, was the leading and guiding spirit of that association, to the service of which he devoted untiring and incessant energy until



the day of his death. We owe him much for all that he did in this direction.

I well remember that at one time some of our friends thought that it was a kind of work of supererogation to keep up such an institution, as Free Trade principles and policy had taken root ineradically in this country and would no more be attacked.

Alas ! for the shortsightedness of the wisest among us. As I write, Protection has once more raised its hideous head ; its supporters, never dead, but by the force of circumstances obliged for years to ' lay low,' are rallying to its support, and it looks as though another General Election will have to be fought on the old question—the rival merits of the Big and the Little Loaf.

It is rather curious that, in the long contest, the Little Englanders will be for the big loaf and the Big Englanders for the little loaf !

Astute Protectionist electioneers will, however, as usual, resort to verbal mystification. They will not speak of Protection, but of ' reform of our fiscal system,' ' broadening the basis of Taxation,' and so forth—phrases with which they hope to ' lead captive silly men.'

As I have hinted above, there is nothing so useful in electioneering as a good phrase, especially if it has a false meaning.

Thus, when we want to steal a country, we call it ' planting the standard of civilization amid barbarous tribes.' When we want to get public money for sectarian schools, we call them ' Voluntary schools.' When we want to maintain the supremacy of a particular view of Christianity, we call it ' recognizing a national religion,' and, when we wish to endow brewers, we say that ' we are striving to benefit the widows and orphans of publicans.'

All these kinds of rubbishy things are sucked down like mother's milk, by a certain class of persons, at elections. Hence the importance of being very clear in the coming Protectionist struggle in explaining what the fight is really about.

' Fiscal Reform ' means upsetting our settled policy of free imports of food, which has given this country a series of years of unexampled prosperity. ' Broadening the basis of taxation ' means making the poor pay more for their food in order that the rich may pay less on their incomes.

All these manœuvres, machination, and dodges are dealt with in the writings of Cobden which you propose to re-issue; and *if*, as I have said, the people will read them, they must have a most beneficial effect.

We cannot unfortunately trust to the Press to lead the people in the right way so much as we could wish.

Mr. Milner-Gibson,<sup>1</sup> speaking in 1853—a year when the Chancellor of the Exchequer happened to have a surplus—said, ‘I want to apply it to the repeal of the taxes on knowledge; and, by spreading sound information among the people, to do something for their future happiness and prosperity.’ One hardly thinks that Mr. Gibson’s forecast has come quite true. In America a mother asked her little boy, ‘What becomes of liars?’ and he replied, ‘They go to New York to write in the newspapers.’ I am very much afraid that some of them remain in England.

At any rate it seems very extraordinary that, if the cheap Press has spread sound political information among the Democracy, the said Democracy should of late years so warmly have supported much that tended to their deterioration and demoralization; acting more as though they were the slaves of the Aristocracy than their masters, which they have the power to be if they had the will.

It is nearly seventy years since Mr. Cobden wrote, ‘The Colonies, Army, Navy and Church are, with the Corn Laws, merely accessories to our Aristocratic Government. John Bull has his work cut out for the next fifty years, to purge his house of these impurities.’

How strange things look to-day in the light of that sentence! John Bull, since that was written, has certainly got rid of the Corn Laws, but one doubts if he would have had even the sense to do that had not a Famine come upon us which made their retention almost impossible. But as to Army and Navy—the agents of discord and devilry throughout the world—he glories in them. The supremacy of the Church he humbly endorses, and as to the House of Lords, where is the working man who does not bow down before a Lord? Mr. Cobden speaks of the Colonies. I

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. T. Milner-Gibson (1806-1884), M.P. for Manchester, and for Ashton-under-Lyne.

suppose he meant that they were our masters—at any rate that is what Mr. Chamberlain is trying to make them now, and Mr. Chamberlain has lately been John Bull's idol.

And now we are called on to fight a General Election for the restoration of the only one of the 'impurities' which John Bull has managed to get rid of, during the seventy years since Mr. Cobden spoke!

Is there any prophet who can tell us how all this is going to end? Yes. Lots of them, but not one whom I would believe. The only thing that is clear is, that we must go on explaining to the people the virtue and value of Free Trade; calling it a 'Fetish' if so our opponents desire. For all truth, whatever it be, is a 'Fetish' to me; and, fighting for it with heart and soul, we may retain the blessings which it has brought us, and so save the country from a return to the hideous horrors of the Protection system.

All honour to you for taking your share in this patriotic duty.

Yours,

WILFRID LAWSON.

June 13, 1903.

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### APPENDIX III

#### *The Memorial.*

IMMEDIATELY after Sir Wilfrid Lawson's death, it was resolved by some of his private friends, and by the supporters of his public policy, to erect a Memorial Statue of one who had so long and so zealously laboured for the moral and material advancement of his fellow-men. The work was entrusted to Mr. David M'Gill, and so admirably executed that whoever gazes on the statue will know, as clearly as it is in the power of Sculpture to tell, how Lawson looked when he was making a public speech. The easy, almost negligent, posture, and the disposition of the hands, are absolutely lifelike.

By the kindness of the London County Council, the statue was erected on the Embankment Gardens, close to Cleopatra's Needle; and it was unveiled by the Prime Minister Mr. Asquith, on the 20th of July, 1909.

The following account of the ceremony (supplied by the *Alliance News*) is inserted by request :

‘ Previous to the unveiling of the memorial statue a meeting was held in Westminster Hall Committee Room, presided over by Mr. Leif Jones, M.P. (President of the United Kingdom Alliance). The Prime Minister was greeted on arrival with hearty cheers.

*The following were present in the room, or on the Embankment :*

The Earl of Carlisle, Lord Courtney of Penrith, Lord Kinnaird, Viscount Knutsford, Viscount Selby, Lord Weardale.

Mr. J. S. Ainsworth, M.P. ; Mr. J. Allen Baker, M.P. ; Mr. Godfrey Baring, M.P. ; Sir John W. Benn, M.P., and Lady Benn ; Sir T. A. Bramsdon, M.P. ; Right Hon. Thomas Burt, M.P. ; Mr. F. W. Chance, M.P., and Mrs. Chance ; Sir F. A. Channing, Bart., M.P. ; Mr. Wm. Clough, M.P. ; Sir W. J. Collins, M.P. ; Mr. W. J. Crossley, M.P., and Mrs. Crossley ; Right Hon. John E. Ellis, M.P. ; Mr. Alfred Emmott, M.P. ; Sir Samuel Evans, M.P. ; Right Hon. Sir Walter Foster, M.P. ; Sir Christopher Furness, M.P. ; Mr. G. P. Gooch, M.P. ; Right Hon. L. V. Harcourt, M.P. ; Mr. N. W. Helme, M.P. ; Mr. J. S. Higham, M.P., and Mrs. Higham ; Mr. Leif Jones, M.P. ; Mr. William Jones, M.P. ; Right Hon. J. Herbert Lewis, M.P. ; Mr. L. L. Morse, M.P. ; Mr. Wm. Redmond, M.P. ; Sir J. Herbert Roberts, Bart., M.P. ; Mr. Charles Roberts, M.P., and Lady Cecilia Roberts ; Right Hon. T. W. Russell, M.P. ; Dr. V. H. Rutherford, M.P. ; Mr. James Tomkinson, M.P. ; Mr. George Toulmin, M.P. ; Right Hon. Eugene Wason, M.P. ; Right Hon. Sir Thomas P. Whittaker, M.P. ; Mr. Henry J. Wilson, M.P. ; Mr. John Wilson, M.P.

Mr. and Mrs. George Alexander, Sir Melvill and Lady Beachcroft, Mr. and Mrs. A. Shirley Benn, Mr. and Mrs. T. Chapman, Mr. and Mrs. E. G. Easton, Rev. and Mrs. F. Hastings, Mr. and Mrs. Ambrose Pomeroy, Mr. and Mrs. W. Reynolds, Mr. and Mrs. H. V. Rowe, Mr. and Mrs. Stuart Sankey, Mr. Edward Smith, Mr. C. Y. Sturge, Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Squires.

‘ Mr. J. Auty, J.P., Batley ; Miss Balgarnie ; Mr. Wm. Bingham, J.P. ; Mr. George Blaiklock ; Mr. C. Boardman, J.P., Stratford ; Mr. E. Boreland, Liverpool ; Mr. and Mrs. A. Brad-



bury, Heaton ; Mr. F. J. Brazier ; Dr. Dawson Burns ; Mr. F. S. Burrows ; Mrs. W. S. Caine ; Rev. John Clifford, D.D. ; Mr. R. L. Coad ; Miss Cons ; Mr. T. A. Cotton, J.P. ; Mrs. and Miss Cotton, Basingstoke ; Mr. and Mrs. Cowie, Melbourne ; Mr. F. Cowley, Ilford ; Mr. E. Crawshaw ; Right Rev. Bishop of Croydon ; Mrs. and Miss Curwen ; Hon. Francis N. Curzon ; Mr. B. M. Culbush ; Mr. J. Derrington, Birmingham ; Mr. Demetrius Domian, Mount Zion, Palestine ; Mr. Thomas R. Drumgold ; Mr. James Duffield, Cockermouth ; Very Rev. the Dean of Durham ; Mr. and Mrs. David Edwards ; Mr. Thomas Fiddick, Camborne ; Sir Edward W. Fithian ; Mr. and Mrs. Fordham, Royston ; Mr. and Mrs. Wilfrid Fordham ; Mr. and Mrs. B. Fox, Hull ; Mr. S. J. Gardner, Ilford ; Mr. George Garlick ; Mr. David Garnett, Southport ; Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Garrard ; Mr. E. Aisbitt Gibson ; Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Gillick ; Mr. M. Glendenning ; Councillor R. Hall, J.P., Salisbury ; Mr. Richard Hartley ; Mr. J. J. Hatch, Leeds ; Messrs. Guy, G. W., and Walter Hayler ; Mr. and Mrs. F. H. Hayward ; Hon. and Very Rev. the Dean of Hereford ; Rev. Canon E. L. Hicks, M.A., Manchester ; Mr. J. Squire Hodges ; Fraulein Hoffmann, Castle Howard ; Alderman J. R. Hogg, J.P., North Shields ; the Hon. Mr. and Mrs. A. Holland-Hibbert, Watford ; Miss Holland-Hibbert, Watford ; Mr. T. Holmes, Southampton ; Mr. Tom Honeyman, Glasgow ; Lady Dorothy Howard ; Sir Stafford Howard, C.B. ; Mr. W. Hoyle, J.P., Tottington ; Mr. N. W. Hubbard, J.P. ; Miss Anderson Hughes, New Zealand ; Mr. R. A. Jameson, Manchester ; Mr. John Kempster, J.P. ; Mrs. Kennedy ; Rev. Mathias and Mrs. Lansdown ; Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Laycock, Leeds ; Dowager Lady Lawson, Aspatria ; Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Bart., and Lady Lawson, Isel Hall ; Mr. Arthur Lawson ; Mr. Daniel Long ; Mrs. Lewis, Blackburn ; Mr. G. W. Macalpine, Accrington ; Mr. James Marsden, J.P., Wigan ; Mr. John Mann ; Mr. Albert E. Marshall ; Mr. John Martindale ; Miss Matthews, Shanklin, Isle of Wight ; Mr. and Mrs. D. McGill ; Mr. Hugh McGill ; Alderman H. Mudd, J.P., Grimsby ; Mr. Theodore Neild, Leominster ; Mr. John Newton ; Lady O'Hagan ; Mr. H. J. Osborn, J.P., Southend-on-Sea ; Mr. Chas. Part ; Mr. Wm. Pearson, Clapham ; Mr. and Mrs. John Pritty ; Rev. Canon H. D.

Rawnsley, Keswick ; Miss A. W. Richardson, B.A. ; Mr. C. L. Rothera, B.A., Nottingham ; Mr. Peter Rowden ; Right Hon. G. W. E. Russell ; Rev. H. S. Sanders, M.A., Woodford ; Mr. Arthur L. Scarr, Dewsbury ; Mr. Percy Scott ; Mrs. Pocklington Senhouse ; Miss Senhouse ; Mr. Guy Senhouse ; Mr. Oscar Senhouse ; Mr. Arthur Severn ; Colonel Sexby ; Mr. G. Shrubsall, J.P., and Mrs. Shrubsall ; Mr. W. Smallman ; Mr. Frederic Smith ; Mr. R. Gaisford Smith ; Mrs. Charles Smith, Sheffield ; Lady Henry Somerset, Reigate ; Mrs. Soutter ; Mr. T. P. Starke, Norwich ; Mr. H. Steptoe ; Mr. H. Steptoe, jun. ; Sir Mark J. McT. Stewart and Miss Stewart ; Rev. Wm. Stott ; Mr. M. Sutherland ; Mr. Isaac Taylor, J.P., Shaw ; Mrs. W. G. Thomas, Carnarvon ; Mr. and Mrs. E. Thruston, Hove ; Miss Thruston, Hove ; Miss Tisdall, Ealing ; Mr. and Mrs. F. Topham, Newcastle-on-Tyne ; Mr. J. W. Travis, South Shields ; Mr. and Mrs. T. B. Tugwell ; Mr. E. F. M. Vokes, Southampton ; Rev. Richard Wake, California ; Mr. and Mrs. G. B. Walker ; Mr. Hardress J. Waller and Hon. Mrs. Waller ; Mr. H. Lee Warner, J.P., Swaffham ; Mr. Robert Watson, Carlisle ; Mr. J. R. Weatherill, Oxford ; Sir Wm. Wedderburn, Bart., Gloucester ; Mr. W. H. Whitehead ; Ven. Archdeacon Wilberforce, D.D. ; Mr. W. Williams ; Mr. W. H. Williams ; Mr. Edward Wood, J.P. ; Mrs. Woodcock, Low Moor ; Mr. Alexander Wright ; Mrs. Frank Wright ; Hon. Mrs. Eliot Yorke, Netley ; and Mr. George B. Wilson, B.A., secretary U.K.A.

*The following Associations were represented :*

- ‘ Baptist Total Abstinence Association : Rev. C. S. Hull.
- ‘ British Temperance League : Charles Smith.
- ‘ National British Women’s Temperance Association : Miss Agnes Slack.
- ‘ Central Sunday Closing Association : Revs. J. Grant Bird and J. Woodford, Causer.
- ‘ Congregational Temperance Committee : Sir John Thomas, J.P., and Rev. Wm. Mottram.
- ‘ Cumberland Band of Hope Union : H. W. Rogerson and Miss M. Laidlaw.

‘English Grand Lodge of Wales I.O.G.T. : Rev. J. A. Rees, B.A.

‘Friends’ Temperance Union : Edwin Bigland.

‘Grand Lodge of England I.O.G.T. : Councillor J. Malins, J.P.

‘Grand Lodge of Scotland I.O.G.T. : Rev. M. Bruce Meikleham.

‘Irish Temperance League : Mr. and Mrs. J. Nelson, W. Wilkinson, and G. L. Ward.

‘London Temperance Hospital : Sir John Thomas, J.P., and Sir T. Vesey Strong, J.P.

‘National Commercial Temperance League : George Campbell.

‘National Free Church Council : Rev. Thomas Law.

‘National Temperance League : Robert Whyte, jun.

‘National Unitarian Temperance Association : Rev. Fred Allen and F. A. Edwards.

‘National United Temperance Council : Charles Pinhorn.

‘North of England Temperance League : Henry Patterson.

‘North Wales Temperance Federation : W. G. Thomas, J.P.

‘Original Grand Order Total Abstinence Sons of the Phoenix : J. W. Crutchley.

‘Primitive Methodist Temperance Society : Rev. Joseph Pearce.

‘Scottish Christian Union, B.W.T.A. : Miss Robertson.

‘Scottish Permissive Bill and Temperance Association : W. J. Allison ; Alex. Black, J.P. ; Miss Griffiths ; Walter Linton ; ex-Bailie Robertson, J.P. ; J. C. Shanks ; and Mrs. Walker.

‘Scottish Temperance League : Alex. Findlay, M.P.

‘Sheffield and Derby Auxiliary, U.K. Alliance : Rev. C. J. Street and W. H. Hall.

‘Sons of Temperance : Walter Davies ; Councillor W. Gleadhill ; Alderman W. Huddart, J.P. ; William Mees ; John Sanderson ; Robert Smith ; and W. J. Wightman.

‘United Methodist Temperance League : Rev. J. Thornley.

‘United Order Total Abstinence Sons of the Phoenix : T. J. Hull.

‘Western Temperance League : T. S. Penny, J.P., and A. G. Barker.

‘Women’s Total Abstinence Union : Mrs. Servante.

‘In opening the proceedings, the Chairman, Mr. Leif Jones, spoke as follows :—Ladies and Gentlemen,—We are met to-day to do honour to the memory of one who was the personal friend of almost every man and woman in this room. (Hear, hear.) Of Sir Wilfrid Lawson more than of most men it might truly be said that he needs no memorial in bronze or marble to keep his memory alive. He had an almost unique power of endearing himself to those among whom he moved, and his memory is enshrined in all our hearts. (Hear, hear.) It falls to me, as President of the United Kingdom Alliance, to try to express something of what our President was to the members of that organization. The Alliance was founded in 1853. Sir Wilfrid was not an original member, though he found it out in the very early years of its existence, and joined wholeheartedly in working for the object which the Alliance had in view, which was and is the suppression of the Liquor-Traffic by the operative will of an enlightened people. (Hear, hear.) Sir Wilfrid was no autocrat, and he hated autocratic methods. It was never his wish to force his views upon people. He was the gentlest and most persuasive of men. (Hear, hear.) But he was convinced that of drink it was profoundly true that

The means to do ill-deeds make ill-deeds done.

He believed that the evils that flow from the Liquor-Traffic were the outcome of a wrong system, and that, if power were given to the people, they would use it to effect their own deliverance. Having realized this himself, he set to work to convince others. It mattered little to him that not many agreed with him; that to the great, wise, and eminent his doctrine seemed paradoxical; that he, who was a lover of freedom if ever there was one, was termed a tyrant and an oppressor. Knowing the truth, he was unshakeable as a rock. Neither ridicule nor abuse could move him. Not that he lived in a Fool’s Paradise. He said of himself once : “In political matters I am not one of your ‘O be joyful’ men; my post in the political world is to sound an alarm, and to call the good men and true to battle, even when the battle looks like a forlorn hope.” For forty-five years he was the political leader of the Temperance



forces of this country, and he turned what looked like a forlorn hope when he began into a triumphal march. He saw the goal clear before him, and marched straight forward towards it. It was sometimes said of him that he had not sufficient flexibility of character to be a successful political leader. (Laughter.) More than once he was troubled by the over-adroit and over-subtle among his own immediate fellow-workers, who wished to seek in by-paths a way round obstacles that obstructed the straight path. He upbraided them not, but he did not follow them. He patiently bided his time till the wanderers returned. ("Hear, hear," and laughter.) Time has justified his faith and his leadership. (Hear, hear.) He first moved his Permissive Prohibition resolution in 1862. There was no division that year, but in 1863 a division was taken in which he had twenty-one followers. In less than twenty years a majority of the House of Commons voted for a similar resolution, and forty-five years afterwards he saw what he himself called the miracle of 1906. Almost his last public act was to lead a band of over a hundred members, who followed him gladly, to wait upon the late Prime Minister, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman—(hear, hear)—at the Foreign Office, to ask from him and to receive from him a renewal of the pledge that he would deal with the Temperance question in the coming session. Neither Sir Wilfrid nor Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman lived to see the fulfilment of that pledge. The carrying out of that pledge was left to our present Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith—(cheers),—who, through the Licensing Bill of last year, sought to give to the people the power for which Sir Wilfrid had contended through his long career; and, realizing to-day how Sir Wilfrid would have felt if he could have lived with us through the great days of the session of 1908, how profound would have been his thankfulness, how boundless his hope and his expectation, I call upon the Prime Minister to address this meeting. (Loud cheers.)

'Mr. ASQUITH was received with loud cheers on rising. He spoke in the following terms:—Mr. Leif Jones, Ladies and Gentlemen,—It is a peculiar pleasure to me to be allowed to take part with you to-day in this interesting ceremony, by which we are setting up a memorial, that will be visible to posterity, of one of the

most remarkable and certainly one of the most attractive political figures of our time. (Hear, hear.) When I first entered public life, Sir Wilfrid Lawson was already a veteran, but I can never forget when I first came to Westminster the cordial welcome and the inspiring companionship which he extended to me, as he was so ready to do to the young—a companionship which, I am happy to recall, ripened into a long and enduring friendship that only closed with his lamented death. Ladies and gentlemen, though there was much in Sir Wilfrid Lawson's character and career that is unusual and indeed unique, there was also much that made him a typical product of English character and of English public life. He was born of what he himself would have described as the squirearchy; the nephew of one of the most eminent of distinguished statesmen of the Victorian era, Sir James Graham; and in his early youth, and indeed long after his early youth, he was a mighty sportsman, and I believe not only a popular, but a highly efficient, master of hounds; and yet, from the moment he took his place in the House of Commons—nay, even earlier, from the moment when he first gave his serious attention to politics, he was a man—as he often expressed it himself in humorous language—for whom minorities had an irresistible fascination. ("Hear hear," and laughter.) The Chairman has referred to the part which Sir Wilfrid Lawson took in the cause of Temperance reform. I think 1862 was the date of what at that time certainly appeared to be a forlorn hope—the first resolution which he moved upon that subject in the House of Commons. Ladies and gentlemen, I need not tell you in this room that Sir Wilfrid Lawson's ideals are, from a legislative point of view, still far from complete realization; but no one who measures the state of opinion forty-five years ago with its condition to-day can doubt that the ripening which we have seen over the whole field is in a large measure due to the exertions of him who first sowed and watered. (Cheers.) To that great cause he primarily consecrated the energies of his long and strenuous life; but, at the same time, it would be a mistake to suppose that Sir Wilfrid Lawson was a man of one idea—(hear, hear)—of one enthusiasm, or of one cause. Nothing of the kind. Wherever he could see, wherever his eye could discern, a minority that was being oppressed; wherever he

could see the first faint glimpse of freedom struggling into the light of day ; there he, a Cobdenite of the Cobdenites, a man of peace, and a hater of aggression, was ready to draw his sword and place it at the disposal of such a cause—(cheers)—and, ladies and gentlemen, when drawn a very keen-bladed weapon it was. A man who, like Sir Wilfrid, is the apostle not of lost, but of gaining, causes—(hear, hear)—content for the most part of his life to be in the minority, but watching year by year the proportions between the rival forces diminishing, and the minority of to-day slowly developing into the majority of the future—a man who undertakes that rôle from conscientious conviction, and with a fearless contempt of popular applause, such a man is always apt to be labelled in our somewhat meagre political vocabulary by the name of a fanatic. Well, never was there a man since the creation of the world who less bore out the traditional pictures and lineaments of a fanatic than did Sir Wilfrid Lawson. (Hear, hear.) Why, Sir, among all the votaries of Bacchus there was no more genial soul, no merrier temper, no wittier tongue, than was to be found in this confirmed drinker of water. (Laughter.) And, as it was in the field of Temperance reform, so it was in every one of the great causes which from time to time he embraced and prosecuted. His wit is the treasured memory of his friends ; but it was a wit which, bright as it was, and ready as it was, and effective as it was, never wounded, never won him an enemy, but among those who were the bitterest of his opponents often turned their wrath into admiration and into sympathy. I doubt very much whether we shall ever see again in our time the combination in one and the same man of such fearlessness and courage, such a passionate love of freedom, such a single-minded independence and self-devotion—(hear, hear)—such an untiring and strenuous assiduity in the pursuit of a cause once taken up and never by him to be laid down—such a combination, I say, of all these qualities with sweetness of temper, with generosity and chivalry of attitude, and with those endearing qualities to which the Chairman has already referred, which made him not only the best of companions but the most cherished of friends. Ladies and gentlemen, I do not think I can do better than close what I have to say to you by quoting one or two of his own words. He said of himself, in a speech which



many of you will remember—nothing was ever said with greater truth or with more modesty :—“ I have advocated questions not to benefit the rich and powerful who have plenty of friends, but I have always striven to promote measures for the great mass of the people, for the weak, for the poor, for the desolate, for the oppressed.” (Cheers.) And, as illustrating another of the qualities to which I referred a moment ago, his indomitable persistence, do not let us ever forget his own witty phrase : “ No man ever got lost on a straight road.” (Cheers.) And, finally, Ladies and gentlemen, let us recall that touching speech which he made quite early in his political career. Forecasting with a foresight which is given to few what the journey before him was going to be, and what would be its goal, he said : “ In this country the Crown is the fountain of honour, but there is one honour which the Crown cannot bestow : the esteem and respect of our fellow-countrymen are theirs alone to give. I shall endeavour ”—this was said fifty years ago, in 1859—“ I shall endeavour so to act that my supporters shall be able to think of me as one

Who broke no promise, served no private end,  
Who gained no title, and who lost no friend.”

(Loud cheers.) Never was a young man's aspiration more abundantly and more honourably fulfilled. (Loud cheers.)

‘ In moving a vote of thanks to the Prime Minister, the Right Hon. Thomas Burt, M.P., said : Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,—The part assigned to me—I won't call it a task, because it is so easy and so agreeable—is to ask you to tender a hearty vote of thanks to the Prime Minister for his kindness in coming here to-day and delivering the address to which we have just listened. (Hear, hear.) We all know that the Prime Minister has very onerous and very multifarious duties to perform, so onerous that it is not quite fair to throw them all upon one man, although happily they seem to sit very lightly upon my right honourable friend. At any rate, he bears them with great stoutness and resolution. Well, we all feel that it is a great kindness for him to have devoted a portion of his well-filled and over-filled time to this meeting to-day. He, if I may say so, with that clearness of thought, with that felicity and terseness of phrase, and, I may



add, with that completeness of statement, of which he is a master, has, I think, said everything that can well and fitly be said on the very great theme that has brought us together to-day. Well, I had the honour, and I esteem it the greatest honour of my life, to be a personal friend of the late Sir Wilfrid Lawson. I knew him before I became a member of the House of Commons, and I am now into my thirty-sixth year of membership in that House—(hear, hear)—and for thirty years he and I were not only close personal friends but also, I think, we were nearly always, if not always, in the same lobby. I need not say that it was occasionally a very roomy lobby. (Laughter.) Sir Wilfrid more than once did me the honour to ask me to second his resolution in the House of Commons, and, although I am pretty accomplished at saying “no” to invitations of that kind, Sir Wilfrid was one of the comparatively few men to whom I could never say “no.” Well, the Chairman in his very happy and effective speech has pointed out the progress that has been made by the cause with which specially Sir Wilfrid Lawson’s name is associated. I may say that I have been a member of the United Kingdom Alliance myself since 1857—(hear, hear)—so that I became a member at a pretty early stage in its career. But, as the Prime Minister has said, after all, Sir Wilfrid Lawson was not a man of one idea.—I sometimes wish that everybody had an idea—(loud laughter)—even one, provided it is a good one. I think he was the eloquent and witty advocate of every good cause. Mr. Disraeli—a great phrase-maker he, and much more than a great phrase-maker—spoke very happily of Sir Wilfrid Lawson’s “gay wisdom.” Well, wisdom is not always gay, nor is gaiety always wise, but he had a very happy combination. And, to come back to the theme with which I began and from which I ought not to have departed, I have the greatest possible pleasure in moving that we tender our heartiest thanks to Mr. Asquith, the Prime Minister, for the address which he has delivered. (Loud cheers.)

‘The Earl of CARLISLE, who seconded the resolution, said :—Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,—It is a very great pleasure to me to be associated with my old friend Mr. Burt, in moving this resolution. I have great pleasure in doing it, not only as a humble follower and member of the Temperance party, but also,

as I think now, with Mr. Burt, one of the oldest surviving personal friends of Sir Wilfrid Lawson. The proverbial wisdom says that familiarity breeds contempt. In no case could the falsity of that have been shown more strongly than with the friends of Sir Wilfrid Lawson. With him familiarity increased admiration and bred affection. It is not only as a Temperance man and a personal friend that I wish to thank Mr. Asquith, but also as a Cumberland man. (Hear, hear.) Now, Sir Wilfrid was pre-eminently a Cumberland man, and Cumberland people, quite irrespective of party or of opinions, were proud of him and loved him. When at Aspatria, where he lived, a memorial was unveiled last year, his political opponents came on the platform and spoke very much what has been said to-day. I am sure that the county which he loved will thank Mr. Asquith for his kindness in finding time to honour the memory of our old friend to-day. I have great pleasure in seconding the resolution. (Loud cheers.)

‘The resolution was carried by enthusiastic acclamation.

‘The company then proceeded to the Victoria Embankment Gardens, where several friends, who had been unable to attend the meeting, assembled round the Statue. The Prime Minister said: “Ladies and Gentlemen, We have already paid our tribute of words to the memory of a great and good man. I now unveil his permanent memorial.”

‘Mr. Asquith then unveiled the handsome monument amid enthusiastic cheers.

‘CANON E. L. HICKS (HONORARY SECRETARY U.K.A.)

‘Ladies and Gentlemen,—I have been asked, as representing the great mass of Sir Wilfrid Lawson’s admirers and followers in the country, to hand this beautiful statue to the London County Council for its custody for ever. I think I was called to this task simply because I had some part in collecting the subscriptions which have erected this statue. When we made our appeal to the country, the response was as instantaneous as it was generous, proving that a large share of the admiration and love of his countrymen had been won by the great man whose presentment is before us. It is, I think, a matter of some congratulation to us and a source of hope, that so many of our countrymen and country-

women learned to love and reverence those qualities that were represented in Sir Wilfrid Lawson. I think, if I may say so, that the artist has somewhat aptly caught a characteristic attitude of our great friend and leader. (Hear, hear.) Sir Wilfrid was not a person who lent himself very much to the artist, and still less to the sculptor. There was nothing sculpturesque about Sir Wilfrid. He was the very antithesis of pose or of self-consciousness. Wherever he went he carried with him a certain easy negligence of manner, as much as to say to everyone, "I work for great causes, and my heart is full of zeal for the good of my countrymen, but I wish to live and to feel and to work with, as well as for, the great masses of my countrymen amongst whom I live." (Hear, hear.) And, as we think, we are also happy in having the permission of the London County Council to employ this beautiful spot for our monument, and I wish now to thank the County Council and its officials for the great courtesy and kindness with which they have met us in the whole of this matter. It is a suitable place for such a man as he whose visible monument we see before us. It is near that House of Commons in which he spent so large a part of his arduous life ; it is also placed in the midst of a great population. The tide of commerce or of pleasure passes perpetually by. The throb of a great city's life is all about us, and the children will play at his feet. (Hear, hear.) He was one who loved the people, who desired to bring light and purity and happiness into their homes ; and all his life and work bore testimony to his belief that the foundation of a prosperous people would be pure and happy homes, and that the hope of our country lay in a sober and free democracy. (Hear, hear.) One homely sentence of his came again and again in his speeches, and I cannot help recording it. He said, "Working-men, you must help yourselves ; no one can help you unless you help yourselves." It appears to me that that homely phrase of his is prophetic of developments which we shall see in the social and political progress of our country in the coming years. Sir Melvill, I ask you, in the name of all the numerous friends who have caused this statue to be erected, to accept it and to keep it in safe custody for generations to come, in the name of the London County Council. (Cheers.)



## 'THE CHAIRMAN OF THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL.

'In receiving the statue on behalf of the Council, Sir R. Melvill Beachcroft (Chairman of the L.C.C.) said :—Canon Hicks, Mr. Asquith, Ladies and Gentlemen,—It is perhaps not wholly inappropriate that the present Chairman of the London County Council should receive this statue at your hands, because that Chairman happens to have been for five years Chairman of the Metropolitan Water Board—(laughter)—whose function it is not only to provide that which is becoming the most popular beverage—(hear, hear)—but to see that it is also wholesome and good. On behalf of the London County Council, I rejoice to be able to accept this beautiful representation, this effigy of this great man, and to give it a home on our great Embankment. (Hear, hear.) London statues are not, perhaps, generally regarded favourably. They are condemned as ugly and frequently out of place. And yet, when we look at Thornycroft's wonderful statue of Cromwell hard by, and also his statue of that great man General Gordon in Trafalgar Square, or the statue of Sir Charles Barry in Westminster Abbey, or Joseph's statue of Wilberforce, or again the statue of that great man Robert Raikes, by Brock, standing close by, may we not think that at all events London is not behind other cities in erecting statues worthy of their originals? And if Mr. Robert Raikes stands here, as he does, as an example to all the world, as an illustration to generations to come, of the value of the Bible in our schools, may not this great statue of Sir Wilfrid Lawson speak to generations to come, of his successful work in lessening the great crime of drunkenness, and relieving this great city from the thralldom of greed? I receive, Sir, with the greatest gratitude on behalf of the London County Council, this statue, and we now undertake to take charge and to take care of it, from this day henceforth and for ever. (Cheers.)

'Mr. LEIF JONES, M.P., rising, said :—Before we break up, may I ask you to show by your applause your thanks to the Prime Minister for unveiling the statue, to the London County Council for receiving it, and to Mr. David McGill, the sculptor, who, though I think he never saw Sir Wilfrid Lawson, has produced for our delight, and the generations who come after us, this beautiful statue? (Loud cheers.)'

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### L'ENVOY

Thou who hast fallen upon the days  
That see the ancient strife renewed,  
Seek not the meed of present praise,  
But, as 'resisting unto blood,'  
In quiet confidence hold on—  
Like him who layeth stone on stone,

In the undoubting faith, although  
It be not granted him to see,  
Yet that the coming age shall know  
He hath not wrought unmeaningly,  
When gold and chrysoprase adorn  
A city brighter than the morn.

G. J. CORNISH.



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